

A BRIEF COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA, EGYPT AND ISRAELI C.5800 BCE – C.1CE (AD).

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Introduction

Much of what is known about the history of these ancient civilizations is based on archaeological discoveries of Sumerian clay-tablet written in cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphics written on papyrus. Both these written languages were developed around the middle of the 4 Millennium BCE. The Sumerian cuneiform preceded the Egyptian hieroglyphics by about 150 years. A major problem with researching this very early period in history is the dating of events. Similar events are often dated differently by different authors and sources. In such cases all dates are included and where possible they are marked as Alt. for alternative. The study makes extensive use of the vast amount of information available on the internet. Footnote references are used where relevant such as where texts are quoted verbatim. A list of the sources used will be provided at the end of the study.

The history of ancient Mesopotamia is rather complexed and varied with different rulers and different dynasties existing at the same time often competed for power. The differences between the early Mesopotamia and Egypt civilizations are well summarised in the following extract from the Encyclopedia Britannica. “Ancient Mesopotamia had many languages and cultures; its history is broken up into many periods and eras; it had no real geographic unity, and above all no permanent capital city, so that by its very variety it stands out from other civilizations with greater uniformity, particularly that of Egypt. The script and the pantheon constitute the unifying factors, but in these also Mesopotamia shows its predilection for multiplicity and variety. Written documents were turned out in quantities, and there are often many copies of a single text. The pantheon consisted of more than 1,000 deities, even though many divine names may apply to different manifestations of a single god” (Encyclopedia Britannica. Ultimate Edition. 2013).



MAP

1. Ancient Mesopotamia.

INTRODUCTION.

Little is known about the history of the Sumerians before the 5th century BCE. Archaeological excavations started around the 1820's CE have revealed human settlements dating to 10,000 BCE in Mesopotamia which suggest that the fertile conditions of the land between two rivers allowed for ancient hunter-gatherer people to settle in the land, domesticate animals, and turn their attention to agriculture. Trade soon followed, and with prosperity came urbanization and the birth of the city and later city-states. It is broadly assumed that the early Mesopotamians came from the Indus Valley region in the east and began to enter the southern Tigris-Euphrates region during the Pre-Literate, Hassunah-Halaf Period C.5800-C.4500 BCE. This period was followed by the Ubaid (C.5300 BCE) and the Warka-Uruk (C.3750 BCE) Periods collectively referred to as the Early Bronze Age Period C.4500-C.3500 BCE. By C.3500 BCE the Sumerians had begun to develop the first picture based writing system known as Cuneiform which evolved over the next 500 years and became the basis of the recorded history of Ancient Sumer.

One of the most famous sources on the ancient history of Sumeria is undoubtable the Library of Nineveh, also known as the Library of Ashurbanipal, King of the Neo-Assyrian Empire C.668-C.627 BCE. The library at Nineveh was established C.639 BCE. Situated on the east bank of the Tigris river, opposite modern day Mosul in Iraq, the remains of the city of Nineveh was discovered and excavated in the 1820's by the archaeologist Claudius J. Rich. In 1849 the Royal Palace of the Assyrian King, Sennacherib (C.705-C.681 BCE) was discovered by the archaeologist Austin Henry Layard. Sennacherib was the second king of the Sargonid Dynasty founded by his father Sargon II (C.721-C.705 BCE). Amongst the 30,000 clay tablets found at Nineveh and later moved to the British Museum in London, was the "Epic of Gilgamesh". Recorded in Akkadian on 12 clay tablets, some of which only fragments have remained, the Epic of Gilgamesh can be traced back to C.2750 BCE when Gilgamesh ruled as king over the city state of Uruk (Erech).

The Epic begins with a prologue in praise of king Gilgamesh who is portrayed as partly divine and partly human. He is described as a great builder and great warrior but a harsh ruler, knower of all things on land and sea. To curb Gilgamesh's harsh rule, the god Anu (father of all god, evil spirits and demons) created Enkidu, a wild man who first lives among animals, but later changed into a contender and travelled to Uruk, where Gilgamesh awaited him. Tablet II describes a trial of strength between the two men in which Gilgamesh is the ultimate victor. Enkidu then became the friend and companion (servant in Sumerian text) of Gilgamesh.

In Tablets III–V the two men set out together against Huwawa (Humbaba), the divinely appointed guardian of a remote cedar forest. Unfortunately, the rest of the event is not revealed in the surviving fragments of the tablet.

In Tablet VI Gilgamesh, who has returned to Uruk, rejects the marriage proposal of Ishtar, the "goddess of love and war". With the aid of Enkidu Gilgamesh then killed the divine bull that Ishtar sends to destroy him.

Tablet VII begins with Enkidu's account of a dream in which the gods Anu, Ea (the Akkadian counterpart of Enki), and Shamash (the Akkadian counterpart of the Sumerian sun god Utu) decide that Enkidu must die for slaying the divine bull. Enkidu then falls ill and dreams of a "house of dust" that awaits him. Gilgamesh's weeping for his friend and the state funeral of Enkidu are narrated in Tablet VIII.

In Tablets IX and X Gilgamesh makes a dangerous journey in search of Utnapishtim, the survivor of the Great Babylonian Flood, in order to learn from him how to escape death. When he finally reaches Utnapishtim, Gilgamesh is told the story of the Great Flood and is shown where to find a plant that can renew youth (Tablet XI). But after

Gilgamesh obtains the plant, it is seized and eaten by a serpent and Gilgamesh returns as a mortal to Uruk. As an appendage to the epic, Tablet XII relates the loss of objects called *Pukku* and *Mikku* (meaning “drum” or “drumstick”) given to Gilgamesh by Ishtar (the Akkadian counterpart of the Sumerian goddess Inanna and the Semitic goddess Astarte). The epic ends with the return of the spirit of Enkidu, who promises to recover the objects and then gives a grim report on the underworld.

The translation done by Smith provided the foundation for the translation of the Sumerian King List (SKL) discovered around 1900 by the German-American scholar, Hermann Hilprecht, at an excavation site at the ancient city of Nippur. The prism which was donated by Herbert Weld Blundell to the Ashmolean Museum of Art and listed as the “Weld-Blundell Prism” or “W-B. 444” is the most complete version to date of the Sumerian King List that has been dated to C.1817–C.1827 BCE. The prism which is about 8-inch (20cm) high and 3.5 inches (9cm) wide contains four sides with two columns on each side. The prism has a shaft at the centre which allowed for the use of a wooden spindle to rotate the prism and read it on all four sides.

A second significant source on the Sumerian King List, also donated by Weld Blundell to the Ashmolean Museum, is the “W-B.62”. The W-B.62 is a small clay tablet, inscribed only on one side, unearthed from Larsa. Dated to circa 2000 BCE, the W-B.62 is considered to be the oldest sources referring to the Sumerian king List.

Ian Lawton in a 2002 article “Problems with the King List” refers to the work by Samuel Kramer on the subject of the Sumerian King List. In terms of Kramer’s analysis, the W-B. 444 prism (incorrectly referred to as W-B.144 by Lawton) revealed a total of 8 pre-flood rulers who ruled over five Sumerian cities for a total of 241,200 years. This was substantially different from the data provided by the W-B.62 prism, which listed a total of 12 rulers who ruled a total of 456,000 years.

The following ancient sources contain references to the *Sumerian King List* or fragments of it:

The Kish Tablet,

The UCBC 9-1819 (“California Tablet”),

The Dynastic Chronicle (ABC 18) including copies, K 11261+ and K 12054,

The Nippur fragment (Ni. 3195),

The Babyloniaca (Berossus),

The Apkullu-list (W.20030, 7).

The W-B.444 and the W-B.62 prisms begin with a list of the antediluvian (“Great Flood”) kings and end with king Sin-Magir of the Isin dynasty C.2017–C.1763 BCE (alt.C.1827-C.1817 BCE). The Isin dynasty is dated to the Neo-Sumerian Period, C. 2017-1763 BCE.

The Kish Tablet ([Scheil dynastic tablet](#)) is an early 2nd millennium BCE tablet which only contains list entries for four Sumerian cities. UCBC 9-1819 (California Tablet) is a clay tablet housed in the collection of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of California. The tablet is dated to the reign of the Babylonian King Samsuiluna (C.1749-C.1712 BCE) or slightly earlier.

The Dynastic Chronicle (ABC 18) is a Babylonian King List written on six columns, beginning with entries for the antediluvian (prior to the flood) Sumerian rulers. K 11261+ is one of the copies of this chronicle, consisting of three joined Neo-Assyrian fragments discovered at the Library of the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal who ruled C.668–627 BCE.

“K 12054” is another Neo-Assyrian fragments from Uruk (C.640 BCE) but contains a variant form of the antediluvians on the list. The later Babylonian and Assyrian king lists repeated the earliest portions of the list, thus preserving them into the 3rd century BCE. At about this time, the Chaldean priest Berossus wrote his famous “Babyloniaca”, which popularized fragments of the King List. In 1960, the Apkullu-list (Tablet No. W.20030, 7) or “Uruk List of Kings and Sages” (ULKS) was discovered by German archaeologists at an ancient temple at Uruk. The list, dating to C.165 BC, contains a series of kings, equivalent to the Sumerian antediluvians, called “Apkullu”.

The story of the Flood has close affinities with the narrative of Utnapishtim as told in the Epic of Gilgamesh. Utnapishtim like Noah had built a large boat on which he, his family and animals escaped the Great Flood. Despite the tangible similarities of the Mesopotamian and Biblical descriptions of the Flood, the biblical story has a unique Hebraic perspective. In the Babylonian story, as conveyed in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the destruction of the Flood was the result of a disagreement among the gods; while in Genesis it resulted from the moral corruption of human history. The primitive polytheism of the Mesopotamian versions is transformed in the Biblical story as an affirmation of the omnipotence and benevolence of the one righteous God. Again, following their survival, Utnapishtim and his wife are admitted to the circle of the immortal gods; but Noah and his family are commanded to undertake the renewal of history. Two major archaeological discoveries made between 1928 and 1929 at the ancient cities of Ur and Kish, also contained reference to the “Great Flood”.

In Genesis 6:18, God says to Noah, “....I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, your sons, your wife and your sons’ wives with you”. According the 2013 version of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the narrative concerning Noah in Genesis 9:20–27 belongs to a different cycle or period which seems to be unrelated to the Flood story. In the latter, Noah's sons Shem, Ham and Japheth were married and their wives accompany them in the ark; but in this narrative they

would seem to be unmarried, nor does the shameless drunkenness of Noah accord well with the character of the pious hero of the Flood story. Three different themes may be traced in Genesis 9:20–27: first, the passage attributes the beginnings of agriculture, and in particular the cultivation of the vine, to Noah; second, it attempts to provide, in the persons of Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, ancestors for three of the races of mankind and to account in some degree for their historic relations; and third, by the curse placed on Canaan, the son of Ham. This it has been argued may offer a veiled justification for the later Israelite conquest and subjugation of the Canaanites. The incident may further symbolize the ethnic and social division of Palestine: the Israelites (from the line of Shem) will separate from the pre-Israelite population of Canaan (which is depicted as licentious), who will then live in subjection to the Hebrews.

As mentioned above, a much later source on the history of Sumer and the Great Flood story was that of the Chaldean priest Berossus C.324–C.261 BCE. He wrote a work in three books (in Greek) on the history and culture of Babylonia which he dedicated to Antiochus I (C. 324–261 BCE). It became widely used by later Greek compilers, whose versions in turn were quoted by religious historians such as Eusebius of Caesarea and Josephus.

In his first book Berossus described the land of Babylonia and the story of creation according to the native legend. The second and third books contained the chronology and history of Babylonia and Assyria, beginning with the “ten kings before the flood”. According to Berossus, a total of 10 kings ruled for a period of 432,000 years before the Great Flood. This is followed by the story of the Flood itself and the restoration of kingship after the Flood. Although Berossus' work survived only in fragmentary citations, it is mainly remembered for passing on knowledge of the origins of Babylon to the ancient Greeks.

Prior to the discovery of the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Sumerian King List (SKL), the Jewish (Tanakh) and Christian Biblical text were the oldest and only known sources on the Ancient Middle East and the origins of humanity.

The history of the Ancient Mesopotamians also provided the sources for many of the modern day mythical stories about the role of ancient aliens in the creation of mankind before the Great Flood and what the Mesopotamian scripts reveal about the end of Earth. Most known amongst these authors also referred to as “catastrophists” are Hans Schindler Bellamy (“The Nazi Influence on Atlantis and Ancient Aliens...”); Ignatius Donnelly (“Atlantis and the origins of civilization” ,1882”); Johann Gottlieb Radlof (“The Shattering of the Great Planets Hesperus and Phaethon and the Ensuing Destructions and Floods”, 1823); Immanuel Velikovsky (“*Worlds in Collision*” 1950, “*Ages in Chaos*” ,1952, “*Earth in Upheaval*”, 1956, “*Oedipus and*

Akhenaton” (1960), “[Peoples of the Sea](#)”, 1977, and “[Ramses II and His Time](#)” ,1978); Erich von Däniken (“Chariots of the Gods”, 1968); and lastly, Zecharia Sitchin (1920-2010), “The 12th Planet” 1976), are probably amongst the most famous of these authors who believe there is a connection between Aliens live and the origins of mankind.

A self-taught scholar in cuneiform Zecharia Sitchin authored several books in which he explained how humanity evolved from ancient astronauts. He attributed the creation of the ancient Sumerian culture to the Anunnaki, a race of extra-terrestrials from a planet beyond Neptune called Nibiru. Sitchin describes the Anunnaki as a technologically advanced human-like extra-terrestrial race identified and referred to as the Nephilim in Genesis. He claimed that Sumerian mythology suggests that Nibiru move in an elongated, 3,600-year-long elliptical orbit around the sun. According to Sitchin, Nibiru (referred to as Marduk by the Babylonians) collided catastrophically with Tiamat (the Babylonian goddess “Enûma Eliš”) which he considers to be another planet once located between Mars and Jupiter. Sitchin claims that when struck by one of planet Nibiru's moons, Tiamat split in two, and then on a second pass, 3600 years later Nibiru struck the broken fragments and one half of Tiamat became the asteroid belt. The second half was pushed into a new orbit which became planet Earth.

According to Sitchin, Enki (“Ea” in Akkadian), the Sumerian god of water and human culture, genetically engineered Homo Sapiens as slave workers to relief the Anunnaki from their hard labour on earth. Ancient inscriptions reported that the human civilization in Sumer, Mesopotamia, was set up under the guidance of these "gods", and human kingship was inaugurated to provide intermediaries between mankind and the Anunnaki (creating the "divine right of kings" doctrine). Sitchin believes that fallout from nuclear weapons, used during a war between factions of the extra-terrestrials, is the "evil wind" described in the “Lament for the destruction of Ur” that bemoan the collapse of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur (C.2112–C.2004 BCE) in southern Mesopotamia. The lament, primarily composed of 11 “songs” or stanzas of unequal length, begins by enumerating some of the prominent cities and temples of Sumer and the deities who had deserted them. In the second “song,” the people of Ur and of other cities of Sumer are urged to set up a bitter lament. The third “song” relates that the goddess Ningal hears the pleas of the people of Ur, but she is not able to dissuade the gods Anu and Enlil from their decision to destroy the city, and the remaining “songs” relate the devastating results of Ur's defeat in battle. The last stanza ends with a plea to Nanna (Akkadian: Sin), the husband of Ningal, that the city may once more rise up and that the people of Ur may again present their offerings to him. The exact year, according to Sitchin, is 2024 BCE which coincided with biblical texts, which in turn, had its origin in the written history of Sumeria. Sitchin was a prolific author who wrote more than 15 books. Some of these

books that are freely available in PDF have been included at the end of this study.

In 2016, Kazem Finjan, the Iraqi Minister of Transport, claimed at a press conference that the Sumerians had built and used an airport in the Dhi Qar Governorate to launch spaceships from 5000 years ago. He cited the work of Sitchin and others in support of his assertions.

1. THE SUMERIANS (C.3500-C.2800BCE) Alt. (C.3000-C.2400 BCE).

Despite the claims made by Sitchin and others on the ancient origins of the Sumerians, very little is actually known about their history before they began to settle in Southern Sumeria and their invention of Cuneiform writing around 3500 BCE. It is generally assumed that they came from the Indus Valley region in the east. By 3500 BCE the early Sumerians had established a political system of walled cities under the control of god-line rulers. At the centre of these ancient cities were huge monumental step temples or Ziggurats. Like the steps of the temples political and religious powers were converged through the appointment of layers of high priests and princes referred to as Lugal ("great or big man"). The rulers of these cities were seen as sacred and divine. They were celebrated in hymns, songs and ceremonies as heaven-sent beings (messiahs) who brought splendour to the land. They were described as the saviour of orphans, as vigilant shepherds, "who conducts the people unto cooling shade." The temples and their administration systems thus played a key role in the religious, political and economic control of the city and its subjects.

The oldest known Sumerian gods were the trinity of Enlil, Anu and Enki; the Sun god "Utu", the Moon goddess "Nanna" and Istar (Innin) the goddess of Love.

The ancient Sumerian sexagesimal system, which divided the time of day into 24 hours, 60 minutes and 60 seconds and determined that a circle is 360° degree, was adopted by the Babylonians and those who succeeded them.

2. THE EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD (C.2800-C.2500 BCE).

The Early Dynastic Period in Sumerian history witnessed the gradual infiltration of the region by Semitic Arabs, Akkadians, Canaanites and Aramaean (Hebrews) tribes who migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to Sumer during the 3rd millennium BCE (See **MAP1. above and MAP 2. below**).

King Mesilim of Kish (today Tall al-Uhaimer in Iraq) was the first Semitic king of the famous ancient city of Ur. Mesilim is known to have been the author of the earliest extant royal inscription, in which he recorded his

arbitration of a boundary dispute between the southern Babylonian cities of Lagash and Umma. The dynasty ended when its last king, Agga, who was defeated by Gilgamesh around 2660 BCE.

In the Old Testament the Semitic Aramaeans are represented as being closely to or similar to the Hebrews. They began to settle in Harran (Haran) in northern Syria from around the 16th century BCE. The Aramaeans (Hebrews) are described in Assyrian records as freebooters. The first mention of the Aramaeans occurred in inscriptions of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (C.1115–C.1077 BCE). By the end of the 11th century BCE, the Aramaeans had formed the city-state of Bit-Adini on both sides of the Euphrates River below Carchemish. They also occupied areas in Anatolia and northern Syria including Damascus. By C.1030 BCE a coalition of the southern Aramaeans, led by King Hadadezer of Zobah, in league with the Ammonites, Edomites, and the Aramaeans of Mesopotamia, attacked Israel. The attack was successfully defeated by King David. We will return to the origins of Israel in Part 3 of the study.

3. THE FIRST DYNASTY OF UR (UR I) (C.2500 BCE).

The First Dynasty of Ur (Ur I) was founded by King Mesannepadda who made it into the capital of the whole of southern Mesopotamia C.2500 BCE. It was one of the world's first completely walled cities and remained inhabited from C. 3500 to C.300 BCE. From the late Ubaid period to the time of the Achaemenid Persian kings Ur featured prominently in the political, religious, and economic activity on the Mesopotamian floodplain which has long been recognized as the "cradle of civilization" and the Biblical site of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10-15). Ur's history from the 4th millennium BCE is well outlined in the Sumerian King List (SKL) which became a significant source in Sumerian and Mesopotamian history. According to the SKL, southern Mesopotamia was divided into some 30 competing city-states by the 3rd millennium. As pointed out above, Ur was among the largest and most prominent and most powerful of these early Sumerian city-states.

The First Dynasty of Ur (Ur I) is famous for the royal tombs excavated at the ancient site in 1922. There are a total of 16 tombs of kings and princess and priestesses with rich burial gifts. The excavations of the tombs also revealed the custom that when the king or Queen died their court officials, servants were buried with them. The custom was the consequence of a "sacred" marriage of the goddess Innin (represented by the high priestess) to Tammuz, the god of the Underworld, represented by the King. Musical instruments from the royal tombs, golden weapons, engraved shell plaques and mosaic pictures, statuary and carved cylinder seals, all are a collection of unique importance, illustrating a civilization previously unknown to the historian. A further

development was shown by the excavation of a small temple at Al-Ubayd, a substructure of Ur. The small temple was richly decorated with statuary, mosaics, and metal reliefs and columns sheathed with coloured mosaic or polished copper. The inscribed foundation tablet of the temple, stating that it was the work of a king of the 1st dynasty of Ur, thus dating the building and proved the historical character of a dynasty that had been mentioned by ancient Sumerian historians but dismissed by modern scholars as fictitious. A few personal inscriptions confirmed the real existence of the almost legendary ruler Sargon I, (Sargon The Great C. 2334–C.2279 BCE) of Akkad.

4. THE FIRST DYNASTY OF LAGASH (LAGASH I) (C.2500-C.2360 BCE).

The First Dynasty of Lagash (Lagash I) can be traced back to Urnanshe (“Ur-Nashe”) who defeated the domination of Kish. Lagash (near modern Telloh in Iraq) was one of the most important capital cities in ancient Sumer, located midway between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in southeastern Iraq. The site of Lagash near Telloh was excavated by the French between 1877 and 1933 and more than 50,000 cuneiform tablets were recovered. The tablets are a major source on the history of the Sumerians in the 3rd millennium BCE. The ancient name of the mound near Telloh was actually Girsu, while Lagash originally referred to a site southeast of Girsu, which later becoming the name of the whole district and also of Girsu itself. The city of Lagash was founded in the pre-historic Ubaid Period (C.5200–C.3500 BCE) and was occupied until as late as the Parthian era (C.247 BCE–C.224 CE).

The famous historical document “Stela of the Vultures” described the reign and deeds of Eannatum the grandson of Urnanshe (“Ur-Nanshe”) who created one of the first verifiable Sumerian empires in history. The “Stela of the Vultures”, now preserved at the Louvre in Paris, is a fragmented limestone stela (stela=standing pillar or shaft) found in Girsu/Telloh in 1881. The stela was erected around C.2500 BCE–C.2400 BCE as a monument of the victory of Eannatum of Lagash over Enakalle of Umma.

As the king of Lagash, Eannatum established his control over all of Sumer, including Ur, Nippur, Akshak (controlled by Zuzu), Larsa, and Uruk. He also annexed the kingdom of Kish, which regained its independence after his death. Umma was made a tributary, where every person had to pay a certain amount of grain into the treasury of the goddess Nina and the god Ingurisa, after personally commanding an army to subjugate the city in a war over the fertile plain of Gu-Edin.

Eannatum also expanded his influence beyond Sumer. He conquered parts of Elam, including the city Az off the coast of the Persian Gulf. He also defeated Shubur, and demanded tributes as far as Mari to the

north. During Eannatum's reign the city of Nina, probably a precursor of Nineveh was rebuilt. Under his successor, Entemena, the rising power of the priesthood became a serious problem and was largely responsible for the rise to power of the 4th ruler, Ugalanda. Ugalanda's reign was ended by the usurper Urukagina. With the aid of "contracts" with the priesthood major social reforms were introduced to protect widows and orphans. During the 3rd Dynasty of Uruk (C.2375-C.2350 BCE) Lugalzaggi ("Lugalzaggisi"), *ensi* ("King of the Lands" or "Sacred King") managed to establish political power, with the aid of a dissatisfied priesthood, over the southern Sumerian cities of Lagash, Umma, Ur, Uruk and Kish. After a reign of twenty-five years that saw the power of Sumeria extended as far as the Mediterranean coast, Lugalzaggi began to lose power to the Semitic Akkadians under Sargon I ("Sargon the Great") C.2450-C.2334 BCE.

5. THE AKKADIAN EMPIRE (C.2450-C.2150 BCE) Alt. (C.2334-C.2150 BCE).



MAP 2. The Akkadian Empire (C.2300 BCE).

Sargon I or "Sargon the Great of Akkad", "ruler of the four quarters of the world" conquered Sumer/Mesopotamia, parts of Syria, Asia Minor and Elam C.2450-C.2334 BCE. The Akkadian Empire founded by Sargon I, lasted for about 150 years until C.2200 BCE when it fell to the invading Gutians. Although considered to be of Semitic origin, not much is known about the early history of the Akkadians. The name "Akkad" was apparently taken from the city of Agade. The Akkadian Empire roughly equates to the area where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers run closest to each other in the south (see Map 3 above). The Empire's northern border extended slightly beyond the areas occupied by the modern day cities

of Al-Fallūjah and Baghdad in Iraq. To the south the Empire included Sumer which was inhabited by non-Semitic Sumerians. Sargon I believed he was the son of a temple priestess and an unknown father. After his death in C.2279 BCE, Sargon's dynasty fell to his sons Rimush and Manishtusu and his grandson NaramSin ("Naram-Sin") who proceed to advance the Empire. Major battles using advance weapons (spears, bows and arrows) were used against the Sumerians in the south. These battles were recorded in the "Stela of the Battle". With Naramsim's death C.2230/2150 BCE the Empire gradually declined under the steady invasion of the Gutians.

6. THE RISE OF THE GUTIANS (C.2230-C.2120 BCE).

The Gutians or Guti were a mountain people who lived primarily around Hamadan in the central Zagros Mountain range. The Gutians began to move into southern Mesopotamia around C.2200 BCE where they defeated the Akkadians. They were however unable to control all of Babylonia as there is evidence that parts of Babylonia, such as Gudea at Lagash remained under independent ruler. The Gutian period was largely and unstable one and in constant political turmoil and cultural stagnation. They were generally considered, in terms of ancient sources, to be poor rulers and administrators.

According to the Sumerian King List, a total of 21 kings ruled for 125 years until C.2120 BCE when the Gutian ruling king Tirigan was defeated by King Utu-Khegal of Uruk. Although they continued to conduct attacks on the Sumerians from their home in the Zagros mountains, they were never again able to take control of Mesopotamia.

7. THE AMORITES AND THE ELAMITES AND THE FALL OF THE THIRD DYNASTY OF UR (III) (C.2112-C.2000 BCE).

With the collapse of the Akkadian Empire around 2150 BCE, the Semitic Amorites began to extend their influence towards Sumer in the south. Their rule, referred to as the "Amorite Period" saw a succession of rulers known as (Urnammu, Shulgi, Bursin, Shusin and Ibbi-sin) who restored the Empire and its temples at Sumer and Akkad to their former glory (See Map 3). The kings of the city-states became the provincial governors of the new empire under King Shulgi who became a "god" through a sacred marriage. He erected a mausoleum for himself and his parents in the royal cemetery of Ur. Trade relations with India were established but were short lived due to ongoing struggles with the Elamites and the King of Isin that ultimately led to the destruction of the Third Dynasty of Ur (Ur III) (C.2004 BCE).

The fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur (Ur III) can be traced with relative accuracy due to specific cuneiform sources such as the "royal

correspondence". The latter source contained inscriptions and poems on the destruction of Ur and Sumer. An archive from Isin reveals how Ishbi-Erra, as usurper and king of Isin, eliminated his former overlord in Ur. Ibbi-Sin was waging war in Elam when an ambitious rival came forward in the person of Ishbi-Erra from Mari, presumably a general or high official. By emphasizing the threatening danger of the Amorites, Ishbi-Erra urged the king to entrust him with the protection of the neighbouring cities of Isin and Nippur. Ishbi-Erra's demand came close to extortion, and his correspondence shows how skilfully he dealt with the Amorites and with individual *ensis* "rulers of the land", some of whom soon went over to his side. Ishbi-Erra also took advantage of the depression that the king suffered because the god Enlil "hated him," a phrase presumably referring to bad omens resulting from the examination of sacrificed animals, on which procedure many rulers based their actions (or, as the case may be, their inaction). Ishbi-Erra fortified Isin and, in the 10th year of Ibbi-Sin's reign, began to employ his own dating formulas on documents, an act tantamount to a rejection of loyalty. Ishbi-Erra, for his part, believed himself to be the favourite of Enlil, the more so as he ruled over Nippur, where the god had his sanctuary. In the end he claimed suzerainty over all of southern Mesopotamia, including Ur.

The decline and end of Ur came about through a series of misfortunes: a famine broke out and Ur was besieged and destroyed by the invading Elamites. Ibbi-Sin was captured. The poems (elegies and laments) record in detail the unhappy end of Ur, a catastrophe that had been brought about by the wrath of Enlil ("Lord of Wind").

Following the decline and collapse of Ur III, Ishbi-Erra established himself in Isin and founded a dynasty that lasted from C.2017-C.1794 BCE. His example was followed by local rulers in the city-states of Dēr, Eshnunna, Sippar, Kish, and Larsa. Overseas trade was revived after Ishbi-Erra had driven out the Elamites from Ur. Under his successor, Shu-Ilishu, a statue of the moon god Nanna, the city god of Ur, was recovered from the Elamites and restored. Up to the reign of Lipit-Ishtar (C.1934-C.1924 BCE), the rulers of Isin so resembled those of Ur, as far as the king's assessment of himself in the hymns is concerned, that it seems almost illogical to suggest a break between Ibbi-Sin and Ishbi-Erra.

Another indirect but far from insignificant source for the political and socioeconomic situation from the 20th to the 18th centuries BCE, is the literature of omens. These are long compendiums in which the condition of a sheep's liver or some other divinatory object (for instance, the behaviour of a drop of oil in a beaker filled with water, the appearance of a new-born baby, and the shape of rising clouds of incense) is described at length and commented on with the appropriate prediction: "The king will kill his dignitaries and distribute their houses and property among the temples"; "A powerful man will ascend the throne in a foreign city"; "The land that rose up against its 'shepherd'

will continue to be ruled by that 'shepherd'; "The king will depose his chancellor"; and "They will lock the city gate and there will be a calamity in the city" to name but a few of such ancient omens.

8. THE INVASION OF THE SEMETIC CANAANITES AND THE BIRTH OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE (C.2000-C.1800 BCE).

By C.2000 BCE Southern and Central Mesopotamia have witnessed a strong influence of Semitism. The origin of the Hebrew, Christian and Islamic religious beliefs are grounded in the narrative that Abram was instructed by God to leave the house of his father Tera (Terah) and take his family from Ur of the Chaldeans to the promised land of Canaan (See Map 3. Below). Although the Hebrew and Christian text do not provide a date for Abram's departure from Ur it is assumed that it took place between the Ur III/Isin-Larsa Dynastic Period C.2017 BCE and the First Dynasty of Babylon C.1894 BCE. An informative article on the subject is "Abraham and the Chronology of Ancient Mesopotamia" by Matt McLellan (["Answers, Research Journal 5\(2012\):141-150"](#)).

According to McLellan the dating of Abram in Mesopotamia is in either the Ur III or Isin-Larsa period. There are different ways of dating Abraham and McLellan gives a very good overview of these different methods. He argues that one of the biggest pieces of evidence used for dating Abraham to the Isin-Larsa period is the fact that "Abraham fought a coalition of four kings from the East during the period when each city-state had its own ruling dynasty of kings (Genesis 14)". This event he argues "had to have been at a time in Mesopotamian history when no individual dynasty had a complete control over the region". The study will return to the subject of Abram and the Jewish people in Part 2 (Egypt) and Part 3 (Israel).

9. THE OLD ASSYRIAN EMPIRE (C.1800-C.1375 BCE).

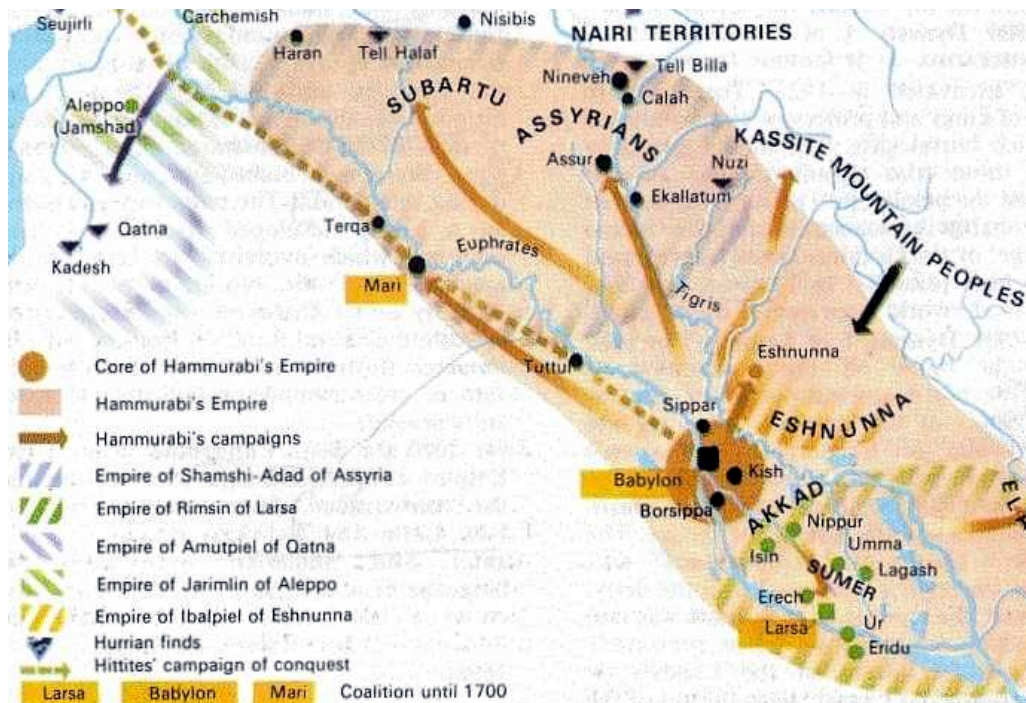
The Assyrians began to enter Mesopotamia from the Greater and Lesser Zab river region in north-eastern Iraq (Map 4. Below). They were a tough, warlike people who had developed from mixing with the non-Sumerians (from the Tell Halaf and Samarra cultures) and Semitic immigrants.



MAP 3. Mesopotamian Empires C.2600-C.1300 BCE.

The capital and the country received their names from Assur (“Asshur”) the supreme god. (See Map 3. Above). Asshur rose to power after the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur (Ur III). The Assyrian captured the Northern Babylonian territory C.1800 BCE. An invasion by the Hittites interrupted trade with the north and north west. This decreased the state’s income and power. Power was restored by Shamshi-Adad (‘King of the Whole’) (C.1749-C.1717BCE) after the defeat of NaramSin of Eshnunna (famous for his set of laws). Shamshi-Adad’s Empire included parts of the mountain regions to the north and south of Lake Vas and Urmia as well as parts of Mesopotamia and Mari. Both lakes are south of the Biblical Mount Arrarat, in modern day Turkey. Numerous claims have been made that the remains of Noah’s Ark have been found on Mount Arrarat none of which have so far proven to be true. Shamshi-Adad’s reign was one of Patriarchal Absolutism. His son Isme-Dragan was defeated by Rimsim of Larsa who later became a vassal of King Hammurabi of Babylon.

10. THE REIGN OF HAMMURABI (C.1810-C.1750 BCE).



MAP 4. The Babylonian Empire Of Hammurabi (C.1810-C.1750 BCE).

Hammurabi ("Hammurapi") (C.1810 – C.1750 BC) was the sixth Amorite king of the First Dynasty of Babylonia. Like all the kings of his dynasty with the exception of his father and grandfather, Hammurabi bore an Amorite name associated with the Amnanum people. He succeeded his father, Sin-Muballit, who abdicated the throne due to ill health. At his ascension to power in C.1792 BCE the region (see Map 4 above.) was contested by six rival city-states namely: Larsa, Eshnunna, Babylon, Qatna, Aleppo and Assur. Larsa, Mari and Babylon were in a power alliance that was in constant war with Eshnunna, Elam, the Kassites (Mountain People) to the East and Assur to the North. During his extended reign of 40 years Hammurabi conquered and subjected Elam and the city-states of Larsa, Eshnunna, and Mari and the Assyrian king Ishme-Dagan I was exiled. Mari (modern day "*Tell el-Hariri*") lies on the right bank of the Euphrates in modern day Syria.

In the same year that Hammurabi came to power, King Rim-Sin of Larsa, who ruled over the south of Babylon, conquered Isin, which came to serve as a buffer between Babylon and Larsa. Rim-Sin of Larsa and Zimrilim of Mari were eventually defeated by Hammurabi. The reign of Zimrilim of Mari is famous for the large archive of more than 20,000 cuneiform clay tablets that were excavated at Mari in 1933/34.

Hammurabi's rule was famous for his code of law which served as the foundation of his rule. The code of law followed the principle of "talion" meaning "an eye for an eye", and "a tooth for a tooth". The language and administration of the Babylonian Empire was Akkadian.

When Hammurabi conquered southern Babylonia he did not follow the century-old tradition of having himself deified during his lifetime. The lasting achievement of Hammurabi's rule was that the theatre of Mesopotamian history, which had been in the south from the beginning of the 3rd millennium BCE, was gradually shifted to the north, where it remained for more than 1,000 years.

11. THE HITTITE KINGDOM AND THE CONQUEST OF BABYLON **(C.1640-C.1350 BCE).**



MAP 5. The Old Hittite Kingdom (C.1640 BCE).

The history of the Hittites can be traced back to around 2000 BCE when they began to gradually invade the areas of Central Asia and Asia Minor from the East (see **MAPS 4 & 5** above). It is possible that the branch of the Hittite royal family that gained control over the region in the 15th century BCE may have originated in Kizzuwadna. Although the dynastic names remained Hittite, Hurrian names began to appear in the royal family. The profound penetration of Hittite civilization by Hurrian ideas, which became pronounced in later times, was initiated during this period.

The First or Old Hittite Kingdom was founded by Labarnas I ("Labernash I") C.1680-1650 BCE. Labarnas I who is known mainly from Hittite text called the "Edict of Telipinus", that states that Labarnas extended his reign from his capital, Kussara, in central Anatolia to as far as the Mediterranean coast and that he cemented his power by appointing his

sons as governors over the conquered cities of Tuwanuwa, Hupisna, Landa, and Lusna (also referred to as Tyana, Cybistra, Laranda, And Lystra). Labarnas also established his rule and control over Arzawa, a region southwest of the Hittite heartland. During the period of the Hittite's decline after the end of The First or Old Hittite Kingdom (C.1500 BCE), Arzawa's power and prominence reached its peak, and its king, Tarkhundaradu, corresponded to the reign of king Amenhotep III of Egypt in the 14th century BCE.

Texts previously assigned to the late-13th century kings Tudhaliyas ("Tudkhaliash") IV and Arnuwandas III, have been shown to belong to the reigns of their predecessors Tudhaliyas II (or I) and Arnuwandas I in the late 15th and early 14th centuries BCE. Tudhaliyas II (I) conquered Arzawa and Assuwa (later Asia) in the west and in the southeast captured and destroyed Aleppo, defeated the Mitanni, and entered into an alliance with Kizzuwadna, which he later incorporated into the Hittites kingdom. In the north, however, access to the Black Sea was blocked by the invasion of the Kaska (Kashku) tribes, and this threat was to continue into the reigns of his successors.

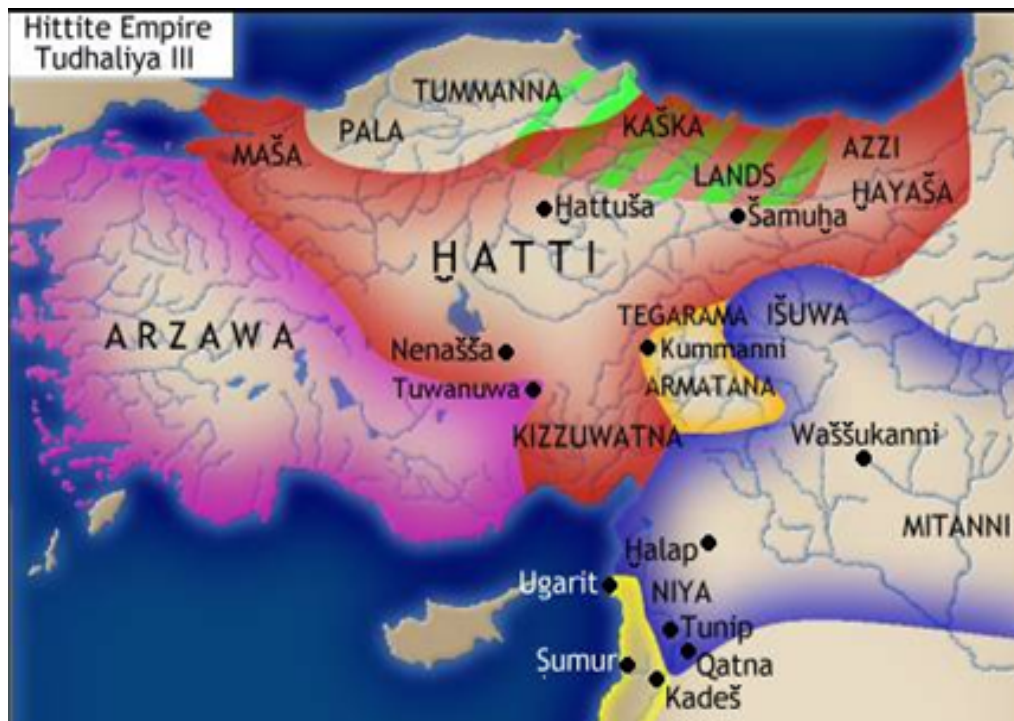
To the West and North of the Euphrates, most of the North Syrian cities submitted to the Hittites. The king of Kadesh put up some resistance but was eventually defeated by the Hittite armies that penetrated southward, almost as far as Damascus.

12. THE NEW HITTITE KINGDOM (C.1380-C.1200 BCE).



MAP 6. The Neo-Hittite Kingdom C.1340 BCE.

The Neo-Hittite Kingdom flourished during the 14th century BCE under the reign of King Mursilis II (C.1346-C.1320 BCE). The son of the great Hittite conqueror Suppiluliumas, Mursilis II succeeded his father after the brief reign of his brother Arnuwandas III. Mursilis II renewed the allegiance of Northern Syria, particularly Carchemish (controlled by his brother Shar-Kushukh) and the kingdom of Amurru (Map 8.). He also conducted a successful campaign against the western kingdom of Arzawa (see **MAP 7** below) one of the main threats to Hittite power. Long-lasting trouble with the Kaska in the north necessitated almost annual pacification operations (10 in all), and the region of Azzi-Hayasa (east of the Kaska) also had to be reconquered by Mursilis II in a number of campaigns. A prolific personal annalist, Mursilis II also edited an account of his father's exploits. His detailed descriptions of his own campaigns have yielded invaluable information about Hittite military campaigns and strategy.



MAP

7. The Hittite Empire.

The first Hittite misfortune after the accession of Mursilis II was the loss of the small vassal kingdom of Washukanni (see Maps 6 & 7 above), the last remnant of the once-powerful Mitannian kingdom. The region was invaded and occupied by the Assyrians under Ashur-Uballit I (C.1354-C.1318 BCE). Carchemish and Aleppo, however, remained loyal to the Hittites thus enabling Mursilis II to turn his military power against Arzawa in southwestern Anatolia when the region with its satellites Mira, Kuwaliya, Hapalla, and the "Land of the River Seha," revolted against the Hittites. A detailed account survives of the two-year

campaign in which Mursilis II successfully suppressed the insurrection, killed the Arzawan king, and Hittite and established Hittite governors over the region. A threat from the north however proved more difficult to control. The Kaska (Map 7 above), who inhabited the remote mountain valleys between the Hittite kingdom and the Black Sea, was in constant revolt against the Hittites. Their tribal structures and guerrilla tactics prevented the Hittites from a conclusive victory despite lengthy campaigns. Unrest in Kaska country seems also to have affected the rather nebulous state of Azzi-Hayasa, a client kingdom farther to the east on the upper Lycus River.

After his death in C.1321/1317 BCE, Mursilis II was succeeded by Muwatallis who inherited a substantial empire. During the early reign of Muwatallis, Seti I (C.1290-C.1279) the 19th dynastic king of Egypt, led an army into Canaan to restore the system of colonial administration, which had to be abandoned during the reign of King Akhenaton ("Akhenaten, Akhenaton, and also called Amenhotep IV") (C.1353–C.1336 BCE).

Seti I managed to advance as far as Kadesh (modern "Tell an-NabiMand") on the Orontes River. A confrontation between the two powers was avoided until the beginning of the reign of Ramses II in C.1279 BCE.



MAP 8. The Battle Of Kadesh C.1275 BCE.

The Hittite and Egyptian armies met at Kadesh C.1275 BCE, (see Map 8) and the battle that followed is one of the first in history of which a detailed tactical description has survived. The Hittite specialist O.R. Gurney, summarized the Egyptian text as follows:

“The Hittite army based on Kadesh succeeded in completely concealing its position from the Egyptian scouts; and as the unsuspecting Egyptians advanced in marching order towards the city and started to pitch their camp, a strong detachment of Hittite chariots passed round unnoticed behind the city, crossed the river Orontes, and fell upon the centre of the Egyptian column with shattering force. The Egyptian army would have been annihilated, had not a detached Egyptian regiment arrived most opportunely from another direction and caught the Hittites unawares as they were pillaging the camp. This lucky chance enabled the Egyptian king to save the remainder of his forces and to represent the battle as a great victory”. ([Gurney O.R., The Hittites, Penguin Books, 1952.](#))

The battle however turned out to be inconclusive. Although Muwatallis managed to advance as far south as Damascus the Hittites were unable

to defeat the Egyptians. The Hittites under Muwatallis then moved their seat of power to Dattassa in the Taurus Mountain area and assigned the government of his northern provinces to his brother Hattusilis III. Dattassa does not appear on any of the ancient maps of the time. Muwatallis was succeeded by his son, Urhi-Teshub (also referred to as “Mursilis III”). Mursilis III was however overthrown by Hattusilis III who, with his influential wife, Puduhepa, brought a period of peace and prosperity to the region. Together they reoccupied the old capital at Hattusa (see Map 8. Above). Common danger, resulting from the growing power of the Assyrians led to an increasingly close entente between the Hittites and the Egyptians which was formalized by a peace treaty in C.1286 BCE. The Treaty was later sealed with a marriage between Hattusilis' daughter and the Egyptian king Ramses II.

Hattusilis was succeeded by his son Tudhaliyas IV (C.1240-C.1210 BCE) who, together with his mother attempted to curb the growing power of Tukulti-Ninurta I of Assyria (C.1233-C.1197 BCE). A bronze tablet excavated at Boğazköy in 1986 records a treaty between Tudhaliyas IV and his cousin Kurunta of Tarhuntassa, who later may have rebelled against him. Boğazkale (also spelled Boghazkeui) is a historic village in north-central Turkey. Located 17 miles (27 km) northwest of Yozgat, it is the site of the archaeological remains of [Hattusas](#) (also spelled Hattusa, Hattusha, or Khattusas), the ancient capital of the Hittites, who established a powerful empire in Anatolia and northern Syria in the 2nd millennium BCE.

Little is known about the rule of Arnuwandas III and Suppiluliumas II, who succeeded Tudhaliyas IV, which make this late and final period in the history of the Hittites difficult to reconstruct. What is known is that under the last two rulers a maritime expedition, perhaps involving Cyprus, was conducted. According to the Ancient History Encyclopaedia, “Phrygia was an ancient nation in western Turkey with its capital at Gordium. Compared to several other nations in Anatolia, the Phrygians were newcomers. Although their language is largely unknown there is a certain amount of certainty that it is related to the languages of the southern Balkan Peninsula. According to Herodotus of Halicarnassus the Phrygians were in fact Thracians who had once crossed the Hellespont (Histories, 7.73). This seems to have happened in the ninth century, when Gordium was founded. However, it is possible that the first Phrygians were already in Anatolia in the eleventh century, because the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (C.1114-C.1076 BCE) refers to the “Muški” that he defeated near the Euphrates and this name was then later applied to the Phrygians. Of course, it is possible that the Assyrians used the same word for two ethnic groups, but it is also possible that early Phrygian raiders indeed reached the Euphrates. These early raiders may or may not have been the inhabitants of Troy”.

“In the course of the eighth century, the Phrygians settled everywhere in Anatolia. One group moved all the way to Tyana in Cappadocia while

another built a kingdom near Gordium, controlling the vast plains near modern Sivrihisar. A third group stayed near the Hellespont, and founded Dascylium. In this age, the country controlled by the Phrygians was larger than the country that later geographers called Phrygia. They accepted many customs from their new subjects, like the cult of the great Mother of the gods. The Phrygians of Gordium created a large kingdom, which occupied the greater part of Turkey west of the river Halys. It was a real state, no longer a tribal society, as can be deduced from about 260 inscriptions in the Phrygian language, found in this heartland. There were contacts with Delphi in the west (Herodotus, Histories, 1.14), and with Urartu and Assyria in the east, to which Gordium was connected by the Royal Road”.



MAP 9. Anatolia and Phrygia.

13. THE MITANNI AND THE HURRIANS (C.1650-C.1360 BCE).

The Mitanni, known to the Assyrians, as “*Hanigalbat*” and to the Egyptians as “*Naharin*” and “*Metani*”, once stretched from present-day northern Iraq, down through Syria and into Turkey. Unfortunately very few records of the people themselves exist, and much of what is known about them is largely derived from correspondence between the Mitanni kings and those of Assyria and Egypt. In the year C.1350 BCE the Mitanni was powerful enough to be equated with the kingdoms of Egypt, the Hatti, Babylonia and Assyria.

While the Mitanni kings were Indo-Iranians, they used the language of the local non-Indo Iranian people known as the Hurrians. The historian

Leick writes, “The population of Mitanni was predominantly Hurrian, but the ruling elites were Indo-European warriors who called themselves Mariannu and who worshipped deities with Vedic names such as Indar, Uruwana, and the collective Devas. The Vedas are a large body of religious texts originating in ancient India and Hinduism”.

The name Washukanni is similar to the Kurdish word 'bashkani' or 'bash' meaning good and 'kanî' meaning well or source, and is thus translated as “source of good” or “source of wealth”. Some scholars have claimed that the ancient city of Sikan was built on the site of Washukanni, and that its ruins may be located under the mound of Tell el Fakhariya near Gozan in Syria. (Joshua Mark, 2011: <https://www.ancient.eu/Mitanni/>).

At the height of their reign in the second millennium, the Mitanni controlled trade routes south to Habur and Mari and up the Euphrates to Carchemish. They also controlled the upper Tigris and its headwaters at Nineveh. Their allies included Kizuwatna in south eastern Anatolia, Mukish, which stretched between Ugarit and Quatna west of the Orontes to the sea, and the Niya which controlled the east bank of the Orontes from Alalah down through Aleppo, Ebla and Hama to Quatna and Kadesh. To the east the Mitanni had good relations with the Hurrian-speaking Kassites whose territory corresponds to present-day Kurdistan. The lands of the Mitanni in northern Syria bordered eastern Anatolia to its west and extended east as far as Nuzi (present-day Kirkuk) and the river Tigris in the east. In the south it extended from Aleppo across to Mari on the Euphrates in the East. The entire region allowed agriculture without artificial irrigation. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses and goats were raised and the Mitanni was famed horsemen and charioteers. It is recorded that they were the innovators who spearheaded the development of the light war chariot with wheels that used spokes rather than the solid wood wheels, such as those used by the Sumerians, so that the chariots were faster and easier to manoeuvre. Excavations of the Hittite archives of Hattusa, near present-day Boğazkale (Turkey), found the oldest surviving horse training manual in the world. The work was written in 1345 BCE on four tablets and contains 1080 lines by a Mitanni horse trainer named Kikkuli, beginning with the words, “Thus speaks Kikkuli, master horse trainer of the land of Mitanni” and proceed to exhaustively describes the proper methods of training horses. (Joshua Mark, 2011, <https://www.ancient.eu/Mitanni/>)

Famous Mitanni kings of the 2nd millennium BCE were Kirta, Shuttarna, Barratarna and Shaushtatar. Perhaps the most outstanding one was king Shaushtatar (C.1430 BCE), who is said to have looted the Assyrian palace in Ashur. Under his rule the boundaries of the Mitanni Kingdom were extended as far as Alalakh, Nuzi, Assur, and Kizzuwatna. Although the Mitanni was eventually defeated by the Egyptian king Tuthmosis III (C.1479-C.1425 BCE) at Aleppo, the later Egyptian dynasties were forced to enter into agreements and treaties with the Mitanni. The daughter of

the Mitanni King Tushratta, princess Taduhepa, was given in marriage to Amenhotep III (C.1391-C.1353 BCE) as part of a treaty which balanced power between the two nations. This treaty was put to the test during a power struggle in Washukanni between Tushratta and a relative of the previous Mitannian king, Shuttarna, also known as Artatama II. Early in the reign in Egypt of Amenhotep II (C.1426-C.1400 BCE), the Mitannians were able to recover Syria and establish their authority over Kizzuwadna. The situation was politically disastrous for the Hittite kingdom, for a firm alliance was concluded between the Mitanni and Egypt. This was sealed by a royal marriage between a daughter of the Mitannian king, Artatama I, and the young Egyptian king, Thutmose IV (C.1400–C.1390 BCE).

Under Suppiluliuma I's reign, which lasted four decades, the Hittite rebuilds their power and re-established a powerful empire with its capital at Hattusas. Suppiluliumas' military career was almost exclusively devoted to struggles with the kingdom of Mitanni in the east and the re-establishment of a firm Hittite foothold in Syria. After an unsuccessful exploratory raid, he plotted to circumvent the Mitanni defences in northern Syria by crossing the Euphrates River farther north and approaching its capital, Washukanni, from the rear. Suppiluliumas' strategy worked and he successfully captured and sacked Washukanni. He then turned south across the Euphrates and secured the allegiance of the Syrian princelings.

Suppiluliumas I left his son Telipinus in charge of Syrian affairs and returned to Hattusas. In the meantime, however, the debilitated Mitanni kingdom underwent a series of upheavals from the growing Assyrian power in the north-east. The Assyrians who had long been supporters of the Mitanni eventually turned against them and defeated them. In the end, Assyria gained its independence, infiltrated Mitanni, and emerged as a new power in the region.

The rise of the Assyrians and the defeat of the Hittite and the Mitanni are broadly associated with the reign of the Assyrian king Adad-Nirari I (ruled C.1307-C.1275 BCE). During the reign of King Shalmaneser I (C.1270-C.1240 BCE), the Mitanni under King Shattuara II rebelled against Assyria with the aid of a nomadic tribe known as the Ahlamu C.1250 BCE. Shattuara's forces were well organized, fully armed, and had occupied all the mountain passes and waterholes to effectively cut off the Assyrian army's water supply and severely hamper their attempts at foraging. Determined to reign and defeat their enemy, Shalmaneser's army won a crushing victory.

According to ancient cuneiform records Shalmaneser's army slayed 14,400 men and the survivors were blinded and carried away. Nine fortified temples were captured and 180 Hurrian cities were "turned into rubble mounds". The Hittites and their supporters were "...slaughtered

like sheep.” The Mitanni was then completely absorbed into the Assyrian Empire and gradually forgotten by history.

14. THE MIDDLE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE (C.1375-C.1053 BCE) Alt. (C.1047 BCE).

The independence of Assyria was restored by King, Eriba-Adad (C.1375-1364 BCE). Babylon was renamed “Karanduniash”. Under the reign of Assuruballit I (C.13364-1328 BCE) who called himself “Brother of the Pharaoh” and his successors, Shalmaneser I (C.1273-1244 BCE) and Tukutli-Ninurta I (C.1243-1207 BCE) conquests continue and Assyrian power went back and forth. By C.1074 BCE the Assyrian Empire was under constant attack by the invading Semitic Arameans and Chaldeans who slowly began to push the Assyrians back to Ussur (Assur) and Nineveh.

15. THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE (C.912-C.612 BCE) Alt. (C.746-C.612 BCE).

Under Adadnirari II (C.909-C.889 BCE) conflict in northern Mesopotamia continues. Under his great-grandson Assurnasirapali II (C.883-C.859 BCE), considered to be cruellest amongst Assyrian kings, an empire equal to that of Tiglath-Pileser I was created. Any resistance was dealt with extreme cruelty. Cavalry was used for the first time in the history of warfare.

Under the reign of Shalmaneser III (C.858-C.824 BCE), power was extended to Syria and Palestine to enable full control over the trade routes from the Tigris and Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea. Damascus, the Aramean capital however remained out of their control. The Medes began to enter into the region of Mesopotamia. Assyria had to rely on the support of Babylon to hold its ground against the Medes who had established themselves in the region of Lake Urmia and Lake Van (Biblical Ararat).

The Assyrian king, Sin-shar-ishkun, died in his burning palace. The commander of the Assyrian army in the west crowned himself king in the city of Harran, assuming the name of the founder of the empire, Ashur-uballit II (C.611-C.609 BCE). Ashur-uballit had to face both the Babylonians and the Medes. Harran was conquered in C.610 BCE but not completely destroyed. In C.609 BCE the remaining Assyrian troops were on the run and with the destruction of their famous Empire they largely disappeared from history.

16. THE CHALDEANS OF UR (C.900-C.800 BCE).

The Chaldeans, mentioned many times in the Bible and other historical sources were an ethnic group that lived in Mesopotamia during the first millennium BCE. The Chaldean started to migrate into southern Mesopotamia during the ninth century BCE. They are referred to in the Bible as living in the city of Ur during which God appeared to Abram, instructing him to gather his family and leave Ur of the Chaldeans for the Promised Land. The date of the event when God appeared to him and when exactly he left Ur is not clear because it is not mentioned in the Biblical text. Current research suggests that the event took place during the 9th century BCE. Older sources have suggested that the event took place around C.2000 BCE or even earlier.

The Chaldeans consisted of three main tribes, namely, the Bit-Dakkuri, the Bit-Amukani, and the Bit-Jakin. The Chaldeans, who had inhabited the coastal area near the Persian Gulf, had never been entirely pacified by the Assyrians and around C.630 BCE, as pointed out above; Nabopolassar became the new King of the Chaldeans. In C.626 BCE he took control of Uruk and crowned himself king of Babylonia. At the same time, he began to restore the dilapidated network of canals in the cities of Babylonia, particularly those in Babylon itself. He also fought against the Egyptians and died in Babylon in C.605 BCE.

17. ASSYRIA UNDER THE REIGN OF TIGLATH-PILESER III AND SHALMANESER V (C.746-C.727 BCE).

To the east, however, the Aramaean tribes rapidly spread into Babylonia, where an Aramaean usurper was crowned king of Babylon under the name of Adad-Apal-Iddin. By the 9th century BCE the whole area from Babylon to the Mediterranean coast was in the hands of the Aramaeans known collectively as (Kaldu or Kashdu) - the Biblical Chaldeans who were the rulers of the city of UR. Assyria, nearly encircled, took the offensive, and in C.853 BCE the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III fought a battle at Karkar against the armies of Hamath, Aram, Phoenicia, and Israel. This battle was indecisive, but in C.838 BCE Shalmaneser succeeded to annex the area held by the tribes on the middle Euphrates.

By C.780 BCE Assyrian was in rapid decline. Syria and considerable territories in the north were lost. A military coup deposed King Ashur-Nirari V and appointed a general to the throne. Under the name of Tiglath-Pileser III (C.745-C.727 BCE), he advanced the empire to its greatest expanse. Political control was established through the reduction of the provinces in order to break the partial independence of the governors. Next, the tax privileges of cities such as Ashur and Harran were invalidated in order to distribute the tax load more evenly over the realm. Military equipment was improved and in C.746 BCE, Tiglath-Pileser III went to Babylon to aid Nabu-Nasir (C.747-C.734 BCE) in his fight against the Semitic Aramaean tribes. The Aramaeans (a

Semitic people from Aram in Syria) were defeated, and the support of the priesthood was solicited through patronizing their building projects. As a result Babylonia managed to retain its independence.

The next step in retaining its power Assyria had to move against the Urartu who enjoyed considerable political power in the Middle East in the 9th and 8th centuries BCE. Although the Urartians owed much of their cultural heritage to the Hurrians, they were to a larger degree indebted to the Assyrians, from whom they borrowed script and literary forms, military and diplomatic practices, and artistic motifs and styles.

The Assyrian influence was manifested in two major periods or phases: first, from C.1275 BCE to C.840 BCE, when the Assyrians campaigned in Urartian territory and met only scattered resistance; and second, from C.840-C.612 BCE. During the first phase the Assyrian's influence was felt directly, and the local inhabitants were helplessly exposed to ruthless depredation at the hands of their rulers. During this time, the Urartians seem to have eagerly absorbed or imitated the amenities of Assyria's higher civilization. During the second phase, Urartu produced its own distinctive counterparts to all Assyrian achievements. The new Urartian kingdom using Assyrian methods waged relentless warfare on its neighbours to the east, west, and north.

Under the reign of the Urartian Ishpuini (C.830-C.810 BCE) followed by his son Meinua (C.810-C.781 BCE), Urartian conquests can be measured indirectly from widespread inscriptions ranging from the lower Murat River basin (around Elâziğ) in the west, to the Aras (Araks, Araxes) River (*i.e.*, from Erzurum to Mount Ararat) in the north, and to the south shore of Lake Urmia in the southeast. Ardini, or Musasir, once conquered by Tiglath-Pileser I of Assyria about 1100, now became part of the Urartian sphere of influence. The temple of Haldi at Ardini was richly endowed by the Urartian kings but was open to Assyrian worshipers.

A number of Urartian inscriptions dealing with religious subjects date to the end of Ishpuini's reign. It seems that the state religion received its established form at this time, and the hierarchy of the many gods in the Urartian pantheon is expressed by a list of sacrifices due them.

The first evidence of engineering projects, designed to increase the productivity of the home country by irrigation, dates to the reign of Meinua. Named after him, the "Canal of Meinua," supplied water over a distance of about 46 miles from an abundant spring to the southern edge of Lake Van.

Under the reigns of Meinua's son Argishti I (C.780-C.756 BCE) and grandson Sarduri II (C.755-C.735 BCE) there is, in addition to inscriptions, a direct historical source in the form of annals carved into

the rock of Lake Van and into stela that were moved in later times to other locations in the vicinity. Under these kings Urartu thrust out westward to the great bend of the Euphrates River and intermittently beyond, toward Melitene (modern Malatya) and the ancient Syrian district of Commagene, thus cutting off one of the main supply roads by which Assyria obtained essential iron from the western Taurus Mountains. Argishti I subdued the Melitene Hilaruada (C.777 BCE), as did Sarduri II around C.750 BCE. King Kushtashpi of Commagene was subjugated by Sarduri II about C.745 BCE.



MAP 10. The Urartu Kingdom. 8th Century BCE.

Part of the domain of King Tuatē of Tabal in the Taurus Mountains had by this time also fallen to Argishti I C. 777 BCE. For a short time Urartu thus had a bridgehead west of the Euphrates from Malatya to Halfeti (ancient Halpa) in Commagene, and its empire reached to within 20 miles of Aleppo in northern Syria.

Argishti and Sarduri also embarked on what was in the end to prove the most fruitful of all Urartian ventures: the conquest and subsequent agricultural exploitation of the regions across the Aras River. Under Argishti I, Diauehi ("the Land of the Sons of Diau"; Assyrian: Daiaeni) was finally defeated, and the upper and middle Aras River valley became a major centre of building, irrigation, and agricultural activity. Sarduri added Lakes Cildir and Sevan. Further advance to the northwest was checked by a new adversary, the kingdom of Qulha (Greek: Colchis). The tens of thousands of prisoners taken on the yearly military

campaigns (in one year as many as 39,000) provided the manpower for intensive cultivation of the royal estates and processing of their crops.

Several times the Urartian kings of this period claimed, probably with justification, to have defeated Assyrian armies: Argishti reported victories over the Assyrians in his sixth and seventh regnal years, when he operated in the Zab and Lake Urmia areas; and Sarduri II defeated the Assyrian king Ashur-Nirari V in the upper basin of the Tigris River C.753 BCE.

The period C.744–C.715 BCE saw the renewal of the Assyrian power. In spite of the support of a number of south Anatolian and north Syrian vassals, Sarduri II steadily lost ground and in C.743 BCE Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria (C.744-C.727 BCE) defeated Sarduri II and his allies in Commagene near Halfeti. When Tiglath-Pileser in C.735 BCE advanced to the gates of Tushpa, a palace revolt placed Sarduri's son Rusas I (C.735-C.713 BCE) at the head of the state.

Tiglath-Pileser son, Sargon II of Assyria (C.721-C.705 BCE), completed the destruction and final elimination of Urartu as a rival for hegemony. Urartu's hopes of support from the northern Syrian principalities came to nothing when the Assyrians defeated them and incorporated Carchemish into the Assyrian empire in C.717 BCE. In the metal-rich Taurus Mountains, the kingdom of Tabal remained a potential ally of Rusas I, as well as of the Phrygian king Midas. Tabal was subsequently defeated and annexed by the Assyrians.

In the same year, Sargon II also began to close in on Urartu from the east. For two years operations were mostly limited to western Iran. The Assyrians championed the interests of the kingdom of Manna, while Urartu aided and abetted Iranian tribes encroaching upon Manna from the east and north. But behind the Urartian lines Assyrian intelligence officers were collecting information with a view to a much more ambitious military undertaking against Urartu.

What finally tipped the scales in favour of the Assyrians was the opening up of a second front: the Cimmerians, a nomadic people from the Caucasus who invaded Urartu shortly before C.714 BCE. Perhaps Rusas I (C.735-C.713 BCE) who himself provoked the onslaught by unwisely destroying several buffer states to the north. Rusas I soon found the Cimmerians at his borders. Undaunted, he proceeded to attack them but suffered a major defeat. The Assyrian crown prince Sennacherib, sent north by King Sargon II (C.721-C.705 BCE) to gather intelligence about Urartian affairs, reported to his father that Rusas' whole army had been defeated in Cimmerian territory and that Rusas himself had fled back to Urartu, having lost contact with his commanders. This encouraged Sargon II to undertake an ambitious campaign in C.714 BCE that finally put an end to the aspirations of the Urartian kings outside of their mountain homeland. After unsuccessfully heading a coalition of his

allies against Assyria, Rusas I return to Tuspha, which Sargon wisely did not try to besiege. Sargon II avoided a clash with the Cimmerians and instead plundered the main sanctuary of the Urartians at Ardini and carried off the statue of Haldi. Hearing of this third calamity, Rusas I finally committed suicide. (Encyclopaedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite, Version 2013).

The military setbacks of Rusas I ended Urartu's political power. His successor son, Argishti II (C.712-C.685 BCE), continued the royal tradition of developing the country's natural resources, and Urartian culture not only survived but continued to flourish for a while, despite its many political problems. The Urartians were finally overcome by the invading Armenians toward the end of the 7th century BCE. The Armenians (*Hay, plural Hayq or Hayk*) were an ancient culture who originally lived in the region known as Armenia, which comprised what are now northeastern Turkey and the Republic of Armenia. The Armenians are the descendants of a branch of the Indo-Europeans. The ancient Greek historians Herodotus and Eudoxus of Rhodes related the Armenians to the Phrygians (referred to above) - who entered Asia Minor from Thrace- and to the peoples of the ancient kingdom upon whom the Phrygians imposed their rule and language. Known to the Persians as Armina and to the Greeks as Armenioi, the Armenian people call themselves Hayq (singular: Hay) and their country Hayastan, and they look back to a folk hero, Hayk.

18. KING ASHURBANIPAL AND THE NEW BABYLONIAL EMPIRE (C.669-C.605 BCE).

Under the reign of King Ashurbanipal the boundaries of the Assyrian Empire reached as far as Armenia in North-Eastern Turkey and the Caucasus Mountains. Under his reign Assyria reached its greatest territorial expansion. Supported by all Assyria's enemies, his brother *Shamash-shum-ukin (Shamash-Shum-Ukin)* rebelled against his brother thus making it impossible to keep the Egyptians at bay, a problem made more difficult by the long distances involved. In C.648 BCE Susa (Elam) was destroyed. The large and famous library of Nineveh containing more than 22,000 cuneiform sources was established. Unfortunately, internal unrest and incursions by the nomadic Scythians steadily weakened the Assyrian state. The final end came around C.614-C.612 BCE when Cyaxares of the Media and Nabopolassar of Babylon finally conquered and destroyed the Assyrian Empire. Nineveh was destroyed in C.614 BCE and Nineveh in C.612 BCE. Haran followed in C.608 BCE. The population was destroyed and the land lay waste. Nineveh became famous for the royal library that was later discovered and excavated.

The Medes under Cyaxares invaded Assyria C.612 BCE, and then took over the Urartian capital of Van C.585 BCE, effectively ending the sovereignty of Urartu. According to the Armenian tradition, the Medes helped them to establish the Orontid dynasty. The Achaemenes divided

their new territory into two parts, and it was in the eastern province that the Orontid dynasty, known locally as the Yervand (from the Iranian word *Ervand*, meaning “mighty”), ruled as satraps on behalf of their Persian overlords.

Under the Orontids, Armenia became an independent kingdom after the disintegration of the Persian Empire c.330 BCE. During the rule of the Orontid dynasty, most Armenians adopted the [Zoroastrian](#) religion. According to the 2013 version of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, *“Among the [Aryan](#) peoples who migrated to the Iranian plateau in the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE, a priestly sacrificial religion arose which held that the world is the field of incessant struggle between the ahuras (gods of light, purity, and order) and the daevas (demons of darkness, pollution, and disorder). This dualist cosmology provided the foundation for Zoroastrianism, the prophetic religion of Zoroaster (c.628–c.551 BCE), which proclaimed the coming triumph of [Ahura Mazda](#) (“Wise Lord”) and his angelic retinue over Ahriman (“Destructive Spirit”), prince of the powers of evil. Zoroastrian end-time accounts describe the coming of one or more cosmic saviours, the resurrection of the dead, a final passage through purgatorial rivers of molten metal, and a resounding defeat of all the demonic powers. The Zoroastrian hell is presided over by Yima, the first victim of death, and is home to all that is evil, dark, corrupt, cold, and hostile to life. The demons who dwell there take delight in torturing sinners; but since evil is destined to be utterly vanquished, hell itself will be destroyed with the restoration of Ahura Mazda’s good creation”*. (Iranian and Zoroastrian eschatology).

In c.626 BCE the Chaldean Nabopolassar (Nabu-apal-usur) revolted at Uruk and occupied Babylon. Several changes in government were introduced and King Ashur-etel-ilani was forced to withdraw to the west, where he died sometime after c.625 BCE.

About a year earlier in 626 BCE the Scythians destroyed Syria and Palestine. In 625 BCE the Medes became united under Cyaxares and began to reconquer the Iranian provinces of Assyria. One chronicle relates of wars between Sin-shar-ishkun and Nabopolassar in Babylonia in c.625–c.623 BCE. In 616 BCE the Medes struck the Assyrian Capital Nineveh, but, according to the Greek historian Herodotus, they were successfully driven back by the Scythians. By 615 BCE, however, the Medes conquered Arrapkha (Kirkuk), and in 614 BCE they took the old capital of Ashur, looting and destroying the city. Now Cyaxares and Nabopolassar made an alliance for the purpose of dividing Assyria. In 612 BCE Kalakh and Nineveh succumbed to the superior strength of their enemies. The revenge taken on the Assyrians was so horrific that 200 years later the country was still sparsely populated.



MAP 11. Kirkuk ("Arrapkha") Iraq.

19. THE RISE OF NEBUCHADREZZAR II (C.605-C.562BCE).

Prior to his death Nabopolasser had named his oldest son, Nabu-kudurri-usur, after the famous king of the second dynasty of Isin. He trained him carefully for the succession of his elderly father. At the time of Nebuchadnezzar's death in C.605 BCE, his son was with his army in Syria; he had just crushed the Egyptians near Carchemish in a cruel and bloody battle in which he pursued them into the south. On receiving the news of his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar II immediately returned to Babylon.

In the numerous building inscriptions little is actually known about his many wars. Most of them, according to the inscriptions, ended with prayers. The Babylonian chronicle existed only for the period C.605-C.594 BCE, which is a very short period and as a result not much is known about the reign of this famous king. He apparently travelled often to Syria and Palestine with his army, at first to drive out the Egyptians and in 604 BCE he conquered the Philistine city of Ashkelon. In 601 BCE he attempted to advance into Egypt but was forced to pull back after a bloody but undecided battle, and had to regroup his army in Babylonia. He finally conquered Palestine at the end of 598 BCE. King Jehoiakim of Judah had sought help from Egypt but the city of Jerusalem was conquered on March 16, 597 BCE. Jehoiakim had died during the siege, and his son, King Johoiachin, together with at least 3,000 Jews, was sent into exile in Babylonia. Zedekiah, original name Mattaniah, was declared king of Judah and ruled from 597 BCE to 587/586 BCE. His reign finally ended in the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of most of the Jews to Babylon.

The Babylonian empire under Nebuchadnezzar II extended to the Egyptian border and had a well-functioning administrative system. Though he had to collect extremely high taxes and tributes in order to maintain his armies and carry out his building projects, Nebuchadnezzar made Babylonia one of the richest lands in western Asia. During his reign the existing walls of Babylon were fortified. The old palace was extensively enlarged and terrace gardens later famously referred to as the “Hanging Gardens of Babylon” were added. Since the Babylonian temples were objects of special concern Nebuchadnezzar devoted himself first and foremost to the completion of Etemenanki, the “Tower of Babel” which began during the time of Nebuchadnezzar I, around C.1110 BCE. The tower stood as a “building ruin” until the reign of Esarhaddon of Assyria, who resumed building it around 680 BCE. Since the tower was never completed Nebuchadnezzar II then took it upon himself to finally complete the tower. According to the Book of Genesis the tower known as “Etemenanki” was dedicated to Marduk by Nabopolassar in [610 BCE](#)).

The base of the tower measured about 300 feet on each side and consisted of five terraces-like gradations surmounted by a temple. The completed tower was about twice the height of existing temples at the time. The wide street used for processions led along the eastern side by the inner city walls and crossed at the enormous Ishtar Gate with its world-renowned bas-relief tiles. Nebuchadnezzar II also built many other smaller temples throughout the country. The tower also referred to as the Great Ziggurat of Babylon was demolished by Alexander the Great. A Sumerian story with some similar elements is preserved in *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*.

A modern idea of the tower of babel can be seen in the Emirate city of Dubai, in the Burj Khalifa, marked as the tallest building in the world with a height of 827 meters, or 2717 feet tall.

20. THE RISE OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS (C.561-C.500 BCE).

The history of Ancient Mesopotamia during the last five centuries BCE is largely a history of the roles and influence of the Medes and the Persians. A summary by the Cambridge Ancient History website states that; *“The Median and Achaemenid periods define a critical disjunction in history. Iranians, more particularly the Medes and the Persians first appear in history in the ninth-century BCE cuneiform texts touching on the western half of the plateau. For some time thereafter the Medes and Persians are only two of several ethnic and political groups found in the Zagros Mountains. Only late in the seventh century BCE do the Medes apparently begin to become the dominant power in Media. Cyrus is the son of Cambyses, grandson of Cyrus, and a descendant of Teispes. Cambyses succeeded to the throne in September 530 BCE after Cyrus’*

death. Four years after ascending the throne Cambyses marched against Egypt. Amasis II or Ahmose II, the shrewd penultimate Egyptian ruler of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, attempted to bolster his defences by securing the aid of the Cypriots and other islanders in order to cut off any possibility of a Persian invasion by sea.” (*The Cambridge Ancient History*, pp. 1-52).

The Medes first came into prominence in the ninth century BCE and is mentioned in inscriptions concerning Shalmaneser III (C.836 BCE). Though under the domination of Assyria until the seventh century BCE, their rise in power was contemporary with the decline of the Assyrian Empire and in 614 BCE the Medes captured Asshur, the capital city of Assyria. In 612 BCE, in alliance with the Chaldeans, they also captured Nineveh resulting in the final downfall of the Assyrian Empire. Toward the end of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, the Persians began to rise to power under Cyrus II. Media was conquered in 549 BCE and united with the Persian Empire to form the Medo-Persia Empire. The history of Babylon ended in 539 BCE and the Achaemenian Dynasty (C.559-C.330 BCE) formed between the Medes and the Persians existed until the conquest of Alexander the Great in 331 BCE. (John F. Walvoord, Jan 2008).



MAP 12. The Achaemenid Empire (C.539-C.331 BCE).

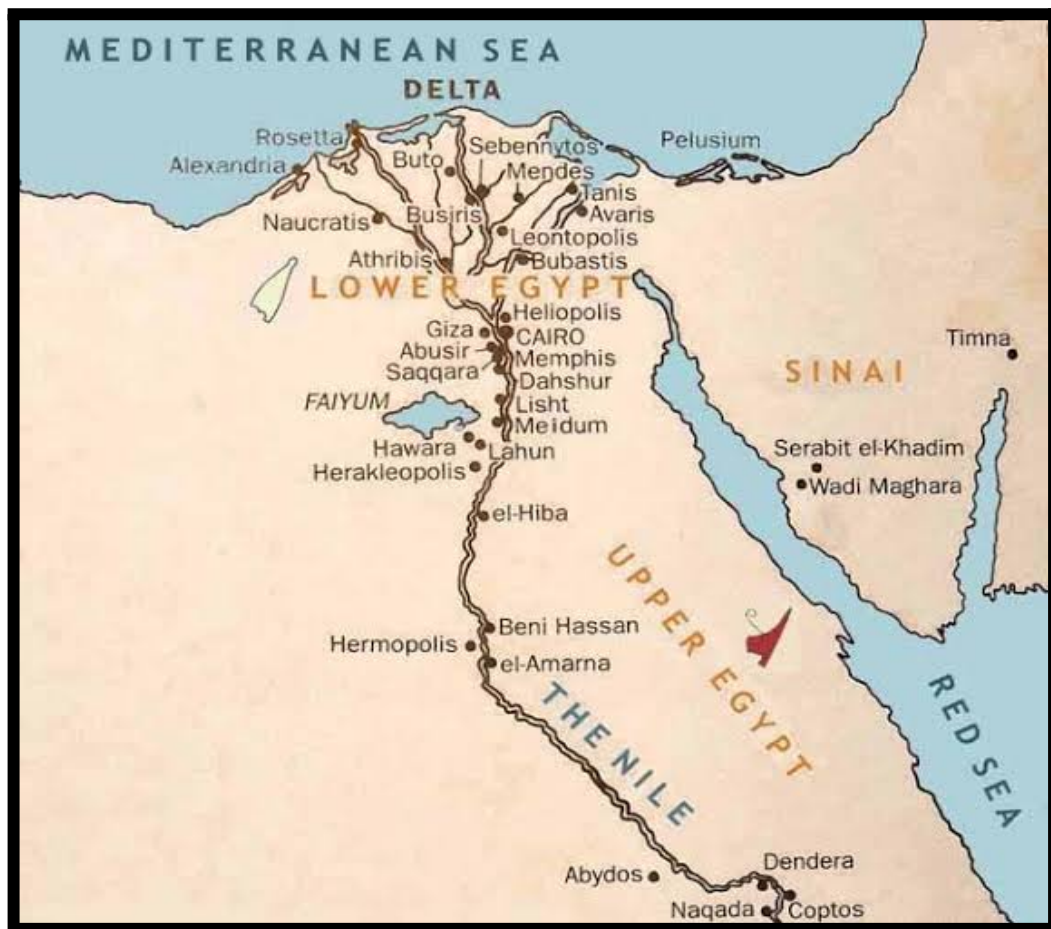
The history of Persian for the next 125 years was filled with conspiracies, assassinations, and the revolts of subject peoples ground down by ruinous taxation. The empire was briefly united under the bloodthirsty

rule of Artaxerxes III, who ruled from about C.359–C.338 BCE. He killed many of his relatives but was finally poisoned by his own physician.

Darius III (C.380–C.330 BCE) originally named Artashat and called Codomannus by the Greeks, was the last king of the Achaemenid Empire. He ruled from C.336–C.330 BCE.

Alexander the Great of Macedon captured the western half of the Persian Empire which remained under his rule until his death in 323 BCE.

Ancient Egypt C.5800 BCE



MAP 1. Ancient Egypt

INTRODUCTION.

Like the ancient history of Mesopotamia not much is known about the history of Ancient Egypt before the invention of the pictorial Hieroglyphic written language around the mid-4th millennium BCE. Although Egypt and Mesopotamia were geographically closely

related the two civilizations followed a very different path from one another.

1. 1. THE GENETIC ORIGINS OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS **(C.5800 BCE).**

The genetic origins of the Egyptians have been a much debated subject in history. Before the Greek name “Aegyptos” was used to describe the Egyptians, the name “Kemet” meaning “black land” was used to describe the Egyptian people. This has led Afro-centric historians to argue that the name or term “Kemet” refers to the Egyptians as Afro-centric black people (<https://listverse.com/about-listverse/>).

In contrast Non-Afrocentric historians have argued that the name “Kemet” has nothing to do with race or skin colour of the Egyptians, but referred to the colour of the fertile soil sediment deposited along the Nile river during the annual flooding between July and October each year.

According to the ancient Greek historian Herodotus (C.550-c.479 BCE), who is the leading source of information on ancient Egyptian history, the Egyptians were descendants of the Colchis in modern day Georgia, East of the Black Sea. The Colchis, like the Egyptians, was dark skinned (*melanchroes*) and had woolly hair (*oulotriches*). During the 19th and early 20th century it was thus widely assumed that the ancient Egyptians were of Caucasian origin and that the Egyptian ruling class was white and their slaves black Africans.

In search of a scientific answer to the genetic origin of the Egyptians, archaeologists in Paris in 1974, decided to forensically examine the mummy of King Ramesses II that was first discovered in 1881. Ramesses II ruled C.1279-C.1213 BCE). The analysis revealed that Ramesses II had red hair, a trait never found in sub-Saharan Africa. Because Ramesses II was in his early nineties when he died, his white hair had been dyed red with henna, but microscopic analysis confirmed he was originally redheaded. Because Ramesses was known to have been of Libyan descent, historians have speculated that he probably had a relatively light skin, especially since ruling Egypt probably didn't require him to go out in the sun much. (<https://listverse.com/about-listverse/>).

In a more recent study done in 2017, by an international team of scientist at the University of Tuebingen and the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena, the remains of 151 mummies found at a site called Abusir el-Meleq in Middle Egypt along the Nile River (see **MAP 2.1** below) were analysed for their DNA. The study which was published in the journal *Nature*

Communications has revealed significant new evidence on the genetic origins of the Ancient Egyptians.
 (<https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms15694>).



MAP 2.1. Abusir el-Meleq

According to an online article by Haridy, “The samples dated from 1400 BCE to 400 CE and were subjected to a new high-throughput DNA sequencing technique that allowed the team to successfully recover full genome-wide datasets from three individuals and mitochondria genomes from 90 individuals”. One of the aims of the research was to “...test if the conquest of Alexander the Great and other foreign powers has left a genetic imprint on the ancient Egyptian population”.
 (<https://newatlas.com/ancient-egyptian-mummy-dna-study/49792/>).

According to Wolfgang Haak, group leader at the Max Planck Institute, the genetics of the Abusir el-Meleq community did not undergo any major shifts during the 1,300 year timespan they studied which suggest that the population remained genetically relatively unaffected by foreign conquest and rule such as that of Alexander the Great.

This Ancient Egyptian genetic ancestry stands apart from more modern Egyptians who share around 8 percent of their DNA with Sub-Saharan African populations. The data offers a fascinating insight into a prolonged period where ancient Egyptian ancestry did not mix with its southern African counterparts. It also suggests that this gene flow into modern Egyptian populations occurred relatively recently, within the past 1,500 years.

According to the study the Trans-Saharan slave trade, which moved an estimated 7 million sub-Saharan slaves up to Northern Africa, over a thousand years up to the nineteenth century, most likely was how this genetic line influenced modern Egyptians.

In terms of their ancient origins the study found that the Egyptians were closely related to Anatolian and Neolithic (Late Stone Age) European populations, as well showing strong genetic traces from the Levant areas in the near east (Turkey, Lebanon). No mention is made of the Phoenicians who played a dominant role in the Eastern Mediterranean and Levant following the collapse of the Late Bronze Age c.1200 BCE. Two of the most dominant and influential of the Phoenician home citadels that rose to power after 1200 BCE were Sidon and Tyre in Lebanon. The greatest of all the Phoenician city-states, however, was Carthage in North Africa. According to legend it was founded in c.813 BCE by Queen Dido, and its name meant "New Village" (*Qart-hadašt*) in the extinct Phoenician dialect (Punic) of that city-state. Carthage (Latin: *Carthago*) was destroyed in c.146 BCE thus ending the era of Phoenician power and expansion.

Finally, there is the Hebrew (Tanakh) and Christian Biblical narratives on the origins of the Ancient Egyptians. According to Genesis the development of humanity and the genetic origins of all the nations on earth came from Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth after the Great Flood. Ham, the youngest and also the cursed son of Noah, was the father of thirty (30) nations which included amongst them Egypt, Ethiopia and Nubia (Kush).

According to the Freeman Institute website, the name Shem refers to "dusky", Japheth to "fair," and Ham to "black". This conclusion is based on the evidence of Hebrew and Arabic, in which the word "chamam" means "to be hot" and "to be black," the latter being derived from the former. The same source also points out that the Biblical record describes Egypt as the Land of Ham. (<https://www.freemaninstitute.com/RTGham.htm>). According to Psalm 105: 23; "Israel also came into Egypt...the land of Ham." Amongst the many descendants of Ham were Cush (Ethiopia), Mitsrayim (Egypt), PuT (Libya), and Canaan (Hivites, Jebusites, Arvadites, Girgashites, Amorites, Arkites, Sinites, Hittites, Sidonians, Perizzites, Zemarites). (<https://biblehub.com/psalms/105-23.htm>).

2. THE NEOLITHIC OR PREDYNASTIC PERIOD (c.5800-c.3100 BCE).

2.1. THE BADARIAN AND NAQADA CULTURE PERIODS (c.4400 BCE).

The Predynastic Badarian Cultural Period (C.4400-C.4000 BCE) represents the earliest archaeological identifiable cultural period in the history of ancient Egypt. Excavations done in 1924 by the archaeologist Caton-Thompson at Hemamieh or “El-Hamm Amiya” near Sohag (see [MAP 2.2.](#) below) revealed that the Badarian culture was the earliest evidence of agriculture activity in Upper Egypt.



MAP 2.2. Sohag.

Originally, the Badarian Culture was considered a chronologically separate unit out of which the contemporary or somewhat later Naqada Culture Period (C.4000 BCE) to the south of the Nile emerged (see [MAP 2.3](#) below).

Archaeological dating suggests that the Naqada cultural period consisted of three phases namely; the Naqada I, II and III periods. The First Period lasted from approximately C.4000 to C.3500 BCE

and was followed by the Naqada II period (C.3500-C.3200 BCE) which was followed by Naqada III (C.3200-C.3100 BCE) period. (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/naqadan/chronology.html#/naqadaIII>).

Historically, not much is known about the two Naqada cultural periods that preceded the Naqada III cultural period C.3100 BCE which coincide with the Early Bronze Age and the invention of the Egyptian hieroglyphics pictorial written language system. Unlike the Sumerian Cuneiform written language that preceded it by about two to three centuries, the Hieroglyphics system was much more pictorial in format than Cuneiform. The name “hieroglyphics” which dates back to C.500 BCE, came from the Greek language meaning “sacred” (*hieros*) and “engrave” (*glypho*). (<http://www.historyworld.net>).

Like the Mesopotamian Cuneiform the Hieroglyphics system evolved over time and by 700 BCE the pressure of business causes the Egyptian scribes to develop a more abbreviated version of the hieratic script known as demotic ('for the people').

Both hieroglyphics and the “demotic” version remained in use until C.400 CE. The discovery of the Rosetta stone, a granite stele inscribed in hieroglyphics, demotic and Greek in 1799, made it possible for the ancient Egyptian code to be read for the first time. The Rosetta Stone was discovered by French soldiers at a small village in the Delta called Rosetta (Rashid). The Stone was carved in 196 BCE.



MAP 2.3. Naqada.

2.2. THE NAQADA III OR PROTODYNASTIC PERIOD (C.3100-C.2700/2686 BCE).

The Naqada III or Protodynastic Period is broadly associated with the period of political unification under king Menes (also known as Narmer) who succeeded in uniting Upper and Lower Egypt with its capital at Memphis. The period is famously known for the invention of the Egyptian hieroglyphic language. Little is known about the first two dynasties, collectively referred to as the Thinis or Archaic Period, that precede the unified period under Menes.

(<http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/time/explore/main.html>).

Menes' name is known because it is written on a votive palette (ceremonial engraving,) used for grinding minerals for kohl, used by ancient Egyptians to outline the eyes. Funeral practices for the peasants would have been the same as in Predynastic times, but the rich demanded something more. Thus, the Egyptians began construction of the mastabas which became models for the later Old Kingdom constructions such as the Step pyramid. Cereal

agriculture and centralization contributed to the success of the state for the next 800 years.

3. THE OLD KINGDOM (AGE OF THE PYRAMIDS) PERIOD **(C.2700/ 2686--C.2200/ 2050 BCE).**

The Old Kingdom period also known as the “Age of the Pyramids” refers to the period in Egyptian history from the Third to the Sixth Dynasties. The period is described as one of political unity and economic stability. The nobility lost its independence and power was centered in the king or Pharaoh (Per-ao, “Great House”) who was considered a god rather than a human representative of a god which was similar to Mesopotamian history at the time. The pyramids were built as massive burial tombs for the Egyptian kings. Many Egyptologists also include the VII and VIII Dynasties as a continuation of the administration that had been firmly established at Memphis under the rule of Djoser (Zoser) C.2670/2650 BCE. Djoser instructed Imhotep, an architect, priest and healer, to design a funerary monument for him; the result was the world’s first major stone building, the Step-Pyramid at Saqqara, near Memphis. The Age of the Pyramids reached its zenith with the construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza, on the outskirts of Cairo. The pyramid, which was built for King Khufu (Greek: “Cheops”), who ruled from C.2589-C.2566 BCE, was later referred by classical historians as one of the “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World”. The Greek historian Herodotus estimated that it took 100,000 men some 20 years to build it. Two other pyramids were built at Giza for Khufu’s successors Khafra (C.2558-C.2532 BCE) and Menkaura (C.2532-C.2503 BCE).

By the time of the Sixth Dynasty (C.2323-C.2150 BCE), after the death of king Pepi II Neferkare in C.2184 BCE, the power and wealth of the Egyptian kings began to decline due the rising power of the feudal nobility and the priesthood around the Sun god Ra (Re). This period of steady decline, common referred to by Egyptologists as the “First Intermediate Period” continued during the Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Dynasties.

Although it has long been believed that slaves labourers built the Egyptian Pyramids and monuments, recent research and analysis of the tombs of the workers who oversaw construction on the pyramids, has shown that they were in fact built by members of the peasant class drawn from across Egypt. Some records from the Fourth Dynasty indicate that each household, regardless of wealth or status, was responsible for providing one worker for particular civic projects while the wealthy hire skilled artisans to take their places.

Today historians and archaeologists discount the narratives that appears in the Biblical Exodus and other sources (such as [Herodotus Histories](#), 2.124-133), which characterize the pyramids as symbols of tyranny built with forced labour, and point to recent discoveries that show these monuments were, in all probability, built by a more or less "willing" population in a highly organized and dedicated manner.

The early Egyptian rulers were referred to as kings. The title Pharaoh (meaning from 'aa, "great house") only came into existence during the 18th dynasty, C.1539-C.1292 BCE). By the 22nd dynasty (C.945-C.730 BCE) the term or name was commonly used as a sign or label of respect.



MAP 2.4. Memphis.

4. THE FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (C.2190/2181-C.2052 BCE).

4.1. THE AGE OF HERACLEOPOLIS.

The First Intermediate Period, which lasted for more than 150 years, saw the rising power of the feudal nobility which led to continues civil wars among contenders for the throne. After the obscure reign of the seventh and eighth dynasty kings, a group of feudal lords arose out of Heracleopolis and took control over Lower Egypt for approximately 594 years. These kings, who comprise the ninth and tenth dynasties, each with nineteen listed rulers, were believed to have descended from Libyan invaders who came into Egypt from the west through the Fayum region. The Heracleopolitan kings eventually overwhelmed the weak Memphite rulers to create the Ninth Dynasty.

(<https://www.cemml.colostate.edu/cultural/09476/egypt02-03enl.html>).

The founder of the Ninth Dynasty, Wankhare Kheti I, is described in legend as an evil and violent ruler who caused much harm to his subjects, was seized with madness and was killed by a crocodile. His successors Wankhare Kheti II and Wankhare Kheti III restored order to the Delta, although their power and influence was never significant compared to that of the kings of the Old Kingdom Period.

Herakleopolis Magna, the Greek name of the capital of Heracleopolis, was a culture centre of Heryshaf, whom the Greeks identified with Herakles (Hercules). During the 1940s, a British archaeological team was rumoured to have discovered a vast labyrinth beneath the ancient city but were unable to complete the excavation due to a previously unknown curse, which caused illness among team members and the disappearance of one of the team leaders. The exact location of the labyrinth still remains a mystery.

A 2008 excavation of the site conducted by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities uncovered burial chambers that had been deliberately burned during ancient times. Amid the charred rubble, excavators found finely carved and painted panels decorated with "false doors," including one inscribed with the royal name Khety, which served as portals for communicating with the dead.

The end of the First Intermediate Period occurred when Mentuhotep II defeated the Heracleopolitan kings of Lower Egypt and reunited Egypt under a single ruler. This act ushered in a period of great wealth and prosperity known as the Middle Kingdom.

5. THE MIDDLE KINGDOM PERIOD (C.2050-C.1800/1570 BCE).

The Middle Kingdom is the period in the history of ancient Egypt stretching from the establishment of the Eleventh Dynasty to the end of the Fourteenth Dynasty, between 2050 BC and 1652 BC.

The period comprises two phases, the Eleventh Dynasty, which ruled from Thebes, and the Twelfth Dynasty onwards, which was centered around el-Lisht.

The Eleventh Dynasty of Ancient Egypt was a group of pharaohs whose earlier members are grouped with the four preceding dynasties to form the First Intermediate Period. , while the later members from Mentuhotep II onwards are considered part of the Middle Kingdom. They all ruled from Thebes.

An inscription carved during the reign of Wahankh Intef II, the third

pharaoh of the Eleventh Dynasty, says that he was the first of this dynasty to claim to rule over the whole of Egypt, a claim which brought the Thebans into conflict with the rulers of [Herakleopolis Magna](#) during the Tenth Dynasty. Intef undertook several campaigns northwards, and captured the important nome (regional governorship) of [Abydos](#).

Warfare continued intermittently between the Thebans and the Herakleopolitans until the fourteenth year of [Nebhetepre Mentuhotep II](#), when the Herakleopolitans were defeated, and the Theban dynasty began to consolidate their rule. Mentuhotep II commanded military campaigns south into Nubia, which had gained its independence during the [First Intermediate Period](#). Some type of military action took place against Palestine, after which the pharaoh reorganized the country and placed a [vizier](#) (high government official) at the head of civil administration for the country.

[Mentuhotep IV](#) (reign 1998–1991 BC) was the final pharaoh of the [Eleventh Dynasty](#). His reign is recalled in inscriptions at [Wadi Hammamat](#) (near Thebes) that record expeditions to the Red Sea coast in search of stone for the royal monuments. The leader of this expedition was Mentuhotep IV's [vizier](#), Amenemhat, who is widely assumed to be the future pharaoh [Amenemhet I](#) (reign 1991 BC – 1962 BC), the first king of the [Twelfth Dynasty](#). Amenemhet is believed by some Egyptologists to have either usurped the throne or assumed power after Mentuhotep IV died without an heir. Thus the Eleventh Dynasty gave way to the more illustrious [Twelfth Dynasty](#).

[Amenemhet I](#) built a new capital for Egypt known as [Itjtawy](#) ("Seizer-of-the-Two-Lands") at a still-unidentified location. Having established his son [Senusret I](#) as his junior co-regent in 1971 BC, Amenemhat was murdered in 1962 BC by a royal bodyguard while Senuseret I was far away campaigning against Libyan invaders. Senuseret rushed to Itjtawy to prevent a takeover and assumed the throne (reign 1971–1926 BC), proving the value of the [coregency](#) system, in which the ruler and his intended heir govern simultaneously. This practice lasted throughout the [Twelfth Dynasty](#) and provided great stability during an eventful, and often turbulent, period in Egyptian history.

Our knowledge of many rulers during the [Twelfth Dynasty](#) is sketchy. Senusret's successor Amenemhat II (reign 1929 BC–1895 BC) made the position of the [nomarchs](#) hereditary again (thus weakening the centralized government), established trade connections with Nubia and probably waged war somewhere in the Middle East. His successor Senusret II (1897 BC–1878 BC) improved trade connections with Nubia, Palestine and the Levant.

His successor [Senusret III](#) (1878 BC–1839 BC) was a true warrior-king, often commanding troops in the field himself. He led his troops deep into Nubia, and built a series of massive forts throughout the region to establish Egypt's formal boundary with the unconquered areas where Nubian resistance continued. On the domestic front, Senusret III built a fine religious temple at Abydos. Though the structure is now destroyed, carved stone reliefs from the temple demonstrate the high quality of the decorations. He ended his rule by making himself senior co-regent and giving his crown to his 20-year-old son [Amenemhat III](#) (reign 1860 BC–1815 BC), the last great pharaoh of the Middle Kingdom.

As Egypt's population began to exceed food production levels, Amenemhat III ordered the exploitation of the green fertile region 100 km south of modern-day Cairo known as the Fayyum and increased mining operations in the Sinai desert. He ended the practice of [nomarchs](#) inheriting their [nomes](#) as Amenemhat II had permitted a century earlier and conscripted Asians to settle in Egypt to labor on Egypt's monuments. But in ancient times, as today, prosperity by such methods could not continue indefinitely.

Late in his reign, the annual floods began to fail. Amenemhat III's successor [Amenemhat IV](#) ruled Egypt for just nine full years (1816 BC–1807 BC) before dying prematurely. His sister, [Queen Sobekneferu](#) (1807 BC–1803 BC), ruled briefly and probably died with no heirs. Thus the [Twelfth Dynasty](#) and the Golden Age of the Middle Kingdom ended around 1800 BC, and was succeeded by the much weaker [Thirteenth Dynasty](#). (from approximately 1773 BC to sometime after 1650 BC), which ruled from [Itjtawy](#) near Memphis and el-Lisht, just south of the apex of the Nile Delta.

6. THE SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (C.1800/1786/1640-C.1750/1567/1550 BCE).

6.1. THE HYKSOS FROM PALESTINE INVADE EGYPT C.1720 BCE

The Hyksos's rise to power in ancient Egypt is a topic of debate, with some historians suggesting that the traditional narrative of an invasion is inaccurate:

•A. Traditional narrative

The Hyksos were a Semitic tribe that invaded Egypt from Canaan, overthrowing the pharaohs and ruling Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period. The Hyksos were said to have been violent conquerors who oppressed the Egyptians.

•B. Alternative theory

The Hyksos were actually immigrants from the Levant region of Western Asia who settled in the Nile Delta and integrated with the local population. They took advantage of the fertile land and prosperous trade of the Nile Delta, and eventually gained enough political power to rule.

Here are some details that support the alternative theory:

- **C. Archaeological evidence**

Excavations at Tell el-Dab'a, the ancient Hyksos capital, show that the Hyksos were not the first Near Easterners to live in the Nile Delta. The burial culture at Tell el-Dab'a blends Egyptian and Near Eastern elements, and many West Asian individuals held important positions in the Middle Kingdom.

- **Strontium isotope analysis**

D. A study of strontium isotope ratios in the teeth of skeletons buried at Tell el-Dab'a suggests that the ruling class had Near Eastern origins, but that the Hyksos rose to power through internal dominance rather than an invasion.

The Hyksos introduced many inventions and technologies to Egypt, including the horse and chariot, which the Egyptians later used to expand their empire.

7.THE OLD KINGDOM PERIOD or AGE OF THE PYRAMID BUILDERS (C. 2686-2181 BCE)

The Old Kingdom began with the third dynasty of pharaohs. Around 2630 BCE, the third dynasty's King Djoser asked Imhotep, an architect, priest and healer, to design a funerary monument for him; the result was the world's first major stone building, the Step-Pyramid at Saqqara, near Memphis. Pyramid-building reached its zenith with the construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza, on the outskirts of Cairo. Built for Khufu (or Cheops, in Greek), who ruled from 2589 to 2566 BCE, the pyramid was later named by classical historians as one of the ancient world's Seven Wonders. Two other pyramids were built at Giza for Khufu's successors Khafra (2558-2532 B.C) and Menkaura (2532-2503 BCE).

During the third and fourth dynasties, Egypt enjoyed a golden age of peace and prosperity. The pharaohs held absolute power and provided a stable central government; the kingdom faced no serious threats from abroad; and successful military campaigns in foreign countries like Nubia and Libya added to its considerable economic prosperity. Over the course of the fifth and sixth dynasties, the king's wealth was steadily depleted, partially due to the huge expense of pyramid-building, and his absolute power faltered in the face of the growing influence of the nobility and the priesthood that grew up around the sun god Ra (Re). After the

death of the sixth dynasty's King Pepy II, who ruled for some 94 years, the Old Kingdom period ended in chaos.

8. FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (C. 2181-2055 BCE)

On the heels of the Old Kingdom's collapse, the seventh and eighth dynasties consisted of a rapid succession of Memphis-based rulers until about 2160 BCE, when the central authority completely dissolved, leading to civil war between provincial governors. This chaotic situation was intensified by Bedouin invasions and accompanied by famine and disease.

From this era of conflicts emerged two different kingdoms: A line of 17 rulers (dynasties nine and 10) based in Heracleopolis ruled Middle Egypt between Memphis and Thebes, while another family of rulers arose in Thebes to challenge Heracleopolitan power. Around 2055 BCE, the Theban prince Mentuhotep managed to topple Heracleopolis and reunited Egypt, beginning the 11th dynasty and ending the First Intermediate Period.

9. SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (C. 1786-1567 BCE)

The 13th dynasty marked the beginning of another unsettled period in Egyptian history, during which a rapid succession of kings failed to consolidate power. As a consequence, during the Second Intermediate Period Egypt was divided into several spheres of influence. The official royal court and seat of government was relocated to Thebes, while a rival dynasty (the 14th), centred on the city of Xoïs in the Nile delta, seems to have existed at the same time as the 13th.

10. THE HYKSOS PERIOD C.1650 – C.1570 BCE)

Around 1650 BCE, a line of foreign rulers known as the Hyksos took advantage of Egypt's instability to take control. The Hyksos rulers of the 15th dynasty adopted and continued many of the existing Egyptian traditions in government as well as culture. They ruled concurrently with the line of native Theban rulers of the 17th dynasty, who retained control over most of southern Egypt despite having to pay taxes to the Hyksos. (The 16th dynasty is variously believed to be Theban or Hyksos rulers.) Conflict eventually flared between the two groups, and the Thebans launched a war against the Hyksos around 1570 BCE, driving them out of Egypt.

11. THE NEW KINGDOM PERIOD (C. 1567- C.1085 BCE.)

Under Ahmose I, the first king of the 18th dynasty, Egypt was once again reunited. During the 18th dynasty, Egypt restored its control

over Nubia and began military campaigns in Palestine, clashing with other powers in the area such as the Mitannians and the Hittites. The country went on to establish the world's first great empire, stretching from Nubia to the Euphrates River in Asia. In addition to powerful kings such as Amenhotep I (1546-1526 BCE), Thutmose I (1525-1512 BCE) and Amenhotep III (1417-1379 BCE), the New Kingdom was notable for the role of royal women such as Queen Hatshepsut (1503-1482 BCE), who began ruling as a regent for her young stepson (he later became Thutmose III, Egypt's greatest military hero), but rose to wield all the powers of a pharaoh.

The controversial Amenhotep IV (C. 1379-1362), of the late 18th dynasty, undertook a religious revolution, disbanding the priesthoods dedicated to Amon-Re (a combination of the local Theban god Amon and the sun god Re) and forcing the exclusive worship of another sun-god, Aton. Renaming himself Akhenaton ("servant of the Aton"), he built a new capital in Middle Egypt called Akhenaton, known later as Amarna. Upon Akhenaton's death, the capital returned to Thebes and Egyptians returned to worshipping a multitude of gods. The 19th and 20th dynasties, known as the Rameside period (for the line of kings named Ramses) saw the restoration of the weakened Egyptian empire and an impressive amount of building, including great temples and cities. According to biblical chronology, the Exodus of Moses and the Israelites from Egypt possibly occurred during the reign of Ramses II (1304-1237 BCE).

All of the New Kingdom rulers (with the exception of Akhenaton) were laid to rest in deep, rock-cut tombs (not pyramids) in the Valley of the Kings, a burial site on the west bank of the Nile opposite Thebes. Most of them were raided and destroyed, with the exception of the tomb and treasure of Tutankhamen (C.1361-1352 BCE), discovered largely intact in A.D. 1922. The splendid mortuary temple of the last great king of the 20th dynasty, Ramses III (C. 1187-1156 BCE), was also relatively well preserved, and indicated the prosperity Egypt still enjoyed during his reign. The kings who followed Ramses III were less successful: Egypt lost its provinces in Palestine and Syria for good and suffered from foreign invasions (notably by the Libyans), while its wealth was being steadily but inevitably depleted.

12. THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (C. 1085-664 BCE)

The next 400 years—known as the Third Intermediate Period—saw important changes in Egyptian politics, society and culture. Centralized government under the 21st dynasty pharaohs gave way to the resurgence of local officials, while foreigners from

Libya and Nubia grabbed power for themselves and left a lasting imprint on Egypt's population. The 22nd dynasty began around 945 BCE with King Sheshonq, a descendant of Libyans who had invaded Egypt during the late 20th dynasty and settled there. Many local rulers were virtually autonomous during this period and dynasties 23-24 are poorly documented.

In the eighth century BCE, Nubian pharaohs beginning with Shabako, ruler of the Nubian kingdom of Kush, established their own dynasty—the 25th—at Thebes. Under Kushite rule, Egypt clashed with the growing Assyrian empire. In 671 BCE, the Assyrian ruler Esarhaddon drove the Kushite king Taharka out of Memphis and destroyed the city; he then appointed his own rulers out of local governors and officials loyal to the Assyrians. One of them, Necho of Sais, ruled briefly as the first king of the 26th dynasty before being killed by the Kushite leader Tanuatamun, in a final, unsuccessful grab for power.

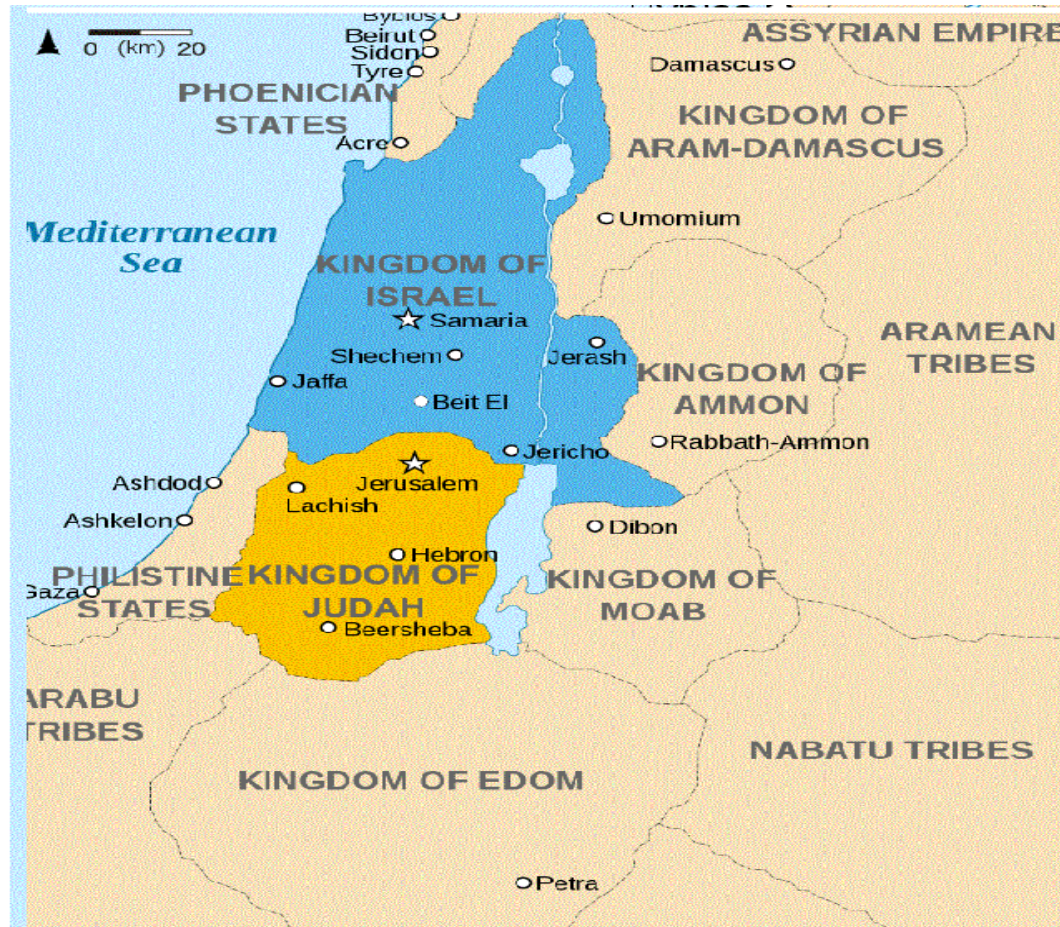
13. FROM THE LATE PERIOD TO ALEXANDER'S CONQUEST (C.664-332 BCE)

Beginning with Necho's son, Psammetichus, the Saite dynasty ruled a reunified Egypt for less than two centuries. In 525 BCE, Cambyses, king of Persia, defeated Psammetichus III, the last Saite king, at the Battle of Pelusium, and Egypt became part of the [Persian Empire](#). Persian rulers such as Darius (522-485 BCE) ruled the country largely under the same terms as native Egyptian kings: Darius supported Egypt's religious cults and undertook the building and restoration of its temples. The tyrannical rule of Xerxes (486-465 BCE) sparked increased uprisings under him and his successors. One of these rebellions triumphed in 404 BCE, beginning one last period of Egyptian independence under native rulers (dynasties 28-30).

In the mid-fourth century BCE, the Persians again attacked Egypt, reviving their empire under Ataxerxes III in 343 BCE. Barely a decade later, in 332 BCE, [Alexander the Great](#) of [Macedonia](#) defeated the armies of the Persian Empire and conquered Egypt. After Alexander's death, Egypt was ruled by a line of Macedonian kings, beginning with Alexander's general Ptolemy and continuing with his descendants. The last ruler of Ptolemaic Egypt—the legendary [Cleopatra VII](#)—surrendered Egypt to the armies of Octavian (later [Augustus](#)) in 31 BCE. Six centuries of Roman rule followed, during which [Christianity](#) became the official religion of Rome and its provinces (including Egypt). The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs in the seventh century A.D. and the introduction of [Islam](#) would do away with the last outward aspects of ancient

Egyptian culture and propel the country towards its modern incarnation.

Ancient Israel C.5800 BCE



(MAP 1.. Ancient Israel)

INTRODUCTION

History of Israel from Canaan to the Jebusite Capital of Jerusalem.

Needs editing

1. CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE

Introduction

Creation of Heaven and Earth, and Adam and Eve

Secular year Jewish year Event in History

-3760 1 Creation of the world; birth of Adam and Eve (Chavah)

-3631 130 Seth (son of Adam) was born

-3526 235 Enosh (son of Seth) was born

-3436	325	Keynan (son of Enosh) was born
-3366	395	Mehalalel (son of Keynan) was born
-3301	460	Yered (son of Mehalalel) was born
-3139	622	Chanoch (son of Yered) was born
-3074	687	Metushelach (son of Chanoch) was born
-2887	874	Lemech II (son of Metushelach) was born
-2831	930	Adam died
-2705	1056	Noah (son of Lemech II) was born
-2225	1536	Noah began the construction of the ark
-2205	1556	Yaphet (son of Noah) was born
-2204	1557	Cham (son of Noah) was born
-2203	1558	Shem (son of Noah) was born
-2105	1656	Metushelach died
-2105	1656	The great flood covered the earth
-2103	1658	Arpachshad (son of Shem) was born
-2068	1693	Shelach (son of Arpachshad) born
-2038	1723	Eber (son of Shelach) was born
-2004	1757	Peleg (son of Eber) was born
-1974	1787	Re'u (son of Peleg) was born
-1942	1819	Serug (son of Re'u) was born
-1912	1849	Nachor I (son of Serug) was born
-1883	1878	Terah (son of Nachor I) was born
The Forefathers		
Secular year Jewish year Event in History		
-1813	1948	Abraham (son of Terah) was born
-1803	1958	Sarah (daughter of Haran) was born
-1788	1973	Abraham married Sarah
-1765	1996	Dispersion from Babel after building the tower
-1761	2000	Terah left Ur Kasdim with his family
-1755	2006	Noah died
-1743	2018	The covenant (Brit Bein Habetarim) with Abraham
-1738	2023	Abraham settled in Canaan
-1727	2034	Ishmael (son of Abraham) was born
-1713	2048	Abraham circumcised himself and Ishmael
-1713	2048	Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed
-1713	2048	Isaac (son of Abraham) was born
-1677	2084	The Akeda, where Isaac was brought on the altar by Abraham
-1677	2084	Sarah died
-1653	2108	Jacob and Esau were born
-1638	2123	Abraham died
-1603	2158	Shem (son of Noah) died
-1590	2171	Isaac blessed Jacob instead of Esau
-1576	2185	Jacob went to Haran
-1574	2187	Eber (great-grandson of Shem) died
-1569	2192	Jacob married Leah and Rachel
-1566	2195	Levi (son of Jacob and Leah) was born
-1562	2199	Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel, was born
-1556	2205	Jacob left Haran
-1553	2208	Benjamin was born

- 1545 2216 Joseph was sold
- 1533 2228 Isaac died
- 1532 2229 Joseph became viceroy of Egypt
- 1526 2235 Kehot (son of Levi) was born
- 1523 2238 Jacob (and his family) went to Egypt

Living in Egypt

Secular year | jewish year | Event in History

- 1506 2255 Jacob died
- 1429 2332 After Levi died, the enslavement in Egypt began
- 1393 2368 Moses was born
- 1355 2406 Joshua was born
- 1314 2447 Moses encountered the burning bush
- 1313 2448 The Jewish nation left Egypt

Traveling Through the Desert

Secular year | jewish year | Event in History

- 1313 2448 The Jewish nation crossed the Red Sea
- 1313 2448 The revelation at Mount Sinai and the giving of the Torah
- 1313 2448 Moses broke the Tablets
- 1312 2449 Moshe came down Mount Sinai with the second Tablets
- 1312 2449 The Tabernacle was erected
- 1312 2449 The spies returned from Canaan with bad news
- 1274 2487 Aharon and Miriam died
- 1273 2488 Moses died

Judges and Early Prophets

Secular year | jewish year | Event in History

- 1273 2488 The Jews crossed the Jordan into Canaan
- 1258 2503 The appointment of the Land of Israel was completed
- 1245 2516 Joshua died
- 1228 2533 The rule of Judges began with Othniel ben Kenaz
- 1188 2573 Ehud ben Gerah became leader
- 1107 2654 Shamgar ben Anath died
- 1107 2654 Deborah became leader
- 1067 2694 Gideon became leader
- 1027 2734 Abimelech, son of Gideon, became leader
- 1024 2737 Tola, son of Pua, became leader
- 1003 2758 Jair, the Gileadite, became leader
- 982 2779 Jephtah (HaGil'adi) became leader
- 969 2792 Elon (HaZevuloni) became leader
- 959 2802 Abdon ben Hillel became leader
- 951 2810 Samson became leader
- 931 2830 Eli the Kohen became leader
- 907 2854 David was born
- 890 2871 Samuel became leader

Kings and the First Holy Temple

Secular year | jewish year | Event in History

- 879 2882 Saul was appointed king
- 877 2884 David became king of Judah in Hebron
- 869 2892 David became king of Israel in Jerusalem
- 837 2924 Solomon became king

-833	2928	The building of the first Beit Hamikdash commenced
-827	2935	The first Beit Hamikdash was completed
-797	2964	Solomon died and his kingdom was divided
-797	2964	Rehabeam (son of Solomon) became king of Judah
-797	2964	Jeroboam ben Nevat became king over Israel
-718	3043	Elijah went up in a chariot of fire
-677	3084	Joash renovated the Beit Hamikdash
-619	3142	Isaiah began his prophecies
-574	3187	The first two of the Ten Tribes were exiled
-566	3195	Another two of the Ten Tribes were exiled
-562	3199	Hezekiah became king of Judah
-556	3205	The last of the Ten Tribes were exiled
-548	3213	Sennacherib invaded the Land of Judah and retreated
-533	3228	Menasseh (son of Hezekiah) became king of Judah
-463	3298	Jeremiah began his prophecies
-458	3303	Josiah renovated the Beit Hamikdash
-442	3319	Jerusalem was conquered and Joiakim (Yehoyakim) was exiled
-440	3321	Joiakim burned the Book of Lamentations composed by Jeremiah
-434	3327	Jerusalem was conquered again and Jehoiachin was exiled
-430	3331	Jeremiah persisted in prophesying calamity
-429	3332	Ezekiel prophesied in exile
-425	3336	The final Babylonian siege of Jerusalem
-423	3338	The walls of Jerusalem were penetrated
-423	3338	The sacrifices ceased in the Beit Hamikdash
-423	3338	The first Beit Hamikdash was destroyed
Exile in Babylon		
Secular yearjewish year Event in History		
-423	3339	Gedalyah ben Achikam was killed
-421	3340	Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar dream
-410	3352	Ezekiel prophesied about the future Beit Hamikdash
-372	3389	Daniel read the writing on the wall
-372	3389	Daniel was thrown into the lion's den
-371	3390	Zerubabel led the return to the Land of Israel
-370	3391	Building of Second Beit Hamikdash commenced, then halted
-366	3395	Achashverosh II made his great banquet
-362	3399	Esther was taken to the palace
-357	3404	Esther took action against Haman's decree
-355	3406	Mordechai proclaimed the celebration of Purim
-353	3408	Building of the second Beit Hamikdash resumed
-349	3412	The second Beit Hamikdash was completed
Building of the Second Holy Temple		
Secular yearjewish year Event in History		
-348	3413	Ezra led the second return to the Land of Israel
-335	3426	Nehemiah returned to rebuild walls of Jerusalem
-313	3448	Ezra died
-313	3448	Simon the Tzaddik met Alexander the Great
-313	3449	The Minyan Shtarot began

Greek Cultural Domination

Secular year jewish year Event in History

-273	3488	Simon the Tzaddik died
-246	3515	72 Elders translated the Torah into Greek (Septuagint)
-140	3621	The revolt of Mattityahu the Chashmona'i

Kingdom of Judea: Dynasty of the Chashmona'im

Secular year jewish year Event in History

-139	3622	Judah the Maccabee ruled
-139	3622	The Second Beit Hamikdash was re-dedicated
-138	3623	Hannukah was declared a festival
-133	3628	Judah the Maccabee was killed in battle
-133	3628	Yonatan (son of Mattityahu) ruled
-127	3634	Shimon (son of Mattityahu) ruled
-119	3642	Yohanan Hyrkanos (son of Shimon) ruled
-93	3668	Judah Aristoblus (son of Yochanan Hyrkanos) ruled
-91	3670	Alexander Yannai (son of Yochanan Hyrkanos) ruled
-73	3688	Queen Shalomtzion (Salome Alexandra, wife of Alexander Yannai) ruled
-65	3696	Aristoblus II (son of Alexander Yannai) ruled
-61	3700	The Romans gained control of Judea
-61	3700	Hyrkanos II (son of Alexander Yannai) ruled
-40	3721	Antigonus (son of Aristoblus II) ruled

Roman Client Kings and Rulers: The Herodian Dynasty

Secular year jewish year Event in History

-36	3725	Herod I ruled, killing all the Chashmona'im
-33	3728	Hillel became the leader of the Torah scholars
-19	3742	Herod I began rebuilding the second Beit Hamikdash
-11	3750	Renovation of the second Beit Hamikdash was completed

1 AD	3761	Archelaus (son of Herod I) ruled
8	3768	Hillel died
10	3770	Archelaus was deposed by the Roman Emperor
21	3781	Agrippa I (grandson of Herod I) ruled
28	3788	The Sanhedrin moved from the second Beit Hamikdash
44	3804	Agrippa II (son of Agrippa I) ruled
50	3810	Rabban Gamliel I (son of Shimon) grandson of Hillel, died
66	3826	Vespasian arrived in Judea to reassert Roman authority
69	3829	The second Beit Hamikdash was destroyed